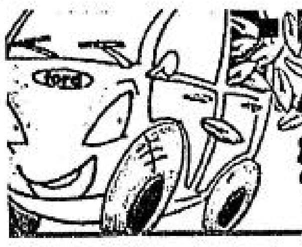


Motoring / C1

Automaker gives RP 'green signal'

Metro / A16

'English-only zones' set in Manila schools

World / A6

Gunmen seize 200 kids in Russian school

Killing of 12 Iraq hostages sparks mosque burning

Across / A14

Gloria asked to spare LGUs from IRA cut

INQUIRER INVESTIGATIVE

Gusto mong maging escort? InqTV reporter, nag-apply!

Ngayong alas-8 ng gabi, sa ABC

Solons agree to give 1 month pay: 'We're not greedy'

By Cynthia D. Balana and Carlito Pablo

THE CALL was for members of Congress to give up their entire pork barrel for this year, which ranges in amounts from P65 million to P200 million.

The response of 37 congressmen yesterday was to give up one month of their basic

SOLONS/ A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

GMA delegation includes sons, in-laws, apos, yayas

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

WHAT is this, a family vacation?

It seems so for President Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to China, considering that her husband,

GMA/ A4

NAGTITIPID PA YAN, HA!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Thursday, September 2, 2004 ★★★ 42 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 267 P18
website: www.inq7.net

Live simply or simply leave

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo, accompanied by Chinese President Hu Jintao, troops the line of the towering Chinese honor guard during the welcoming ceremony outside the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. *(See story on Page A4.)*

VAL HANDUMON

GMA spells out austerity measures for all officials

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

OFFICIALS living "lavish lifestyles" and violating the government's austerity measures at this time of economic hardship will be fired and criminally charged.

President Macapagal-Arroyo aired this warning as she issued Administrative Order No. 103 imposing mandatory cost-cutting measures on all national government agencies, state colleges and universities, and government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs).

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye defined lavish lifestyle as "living beyond your means or living in a manner that is not appropriate" to the times.

"You have to consider the straits that we are in, and we have to try to be modest in our living. That's provided for in the code of conduct for government employees," he said.

Bunye said agencies like the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission would continue investigating the lifestyles of public officials.

Since AO 103 covers only the executive branch, Ms Arroyo called on Congress, the judiciary and local government units to adopt the cost-cutting measures to help the government solve the fiscal crisis.

"The legislative and judicial branches of government, as well as agencies vested with fiscal autonomy, such as constitutional commissions and local governments, are strongly urged to adopt the provisions of this order," Ms Arroyo said in the AO issued on Wednesday.

"Local government units are reminded to adhere to prescribed limits in personal services expenditures under the Local Government Code, and to maximize the utilization of 20 percent of their internal revenue allotment (IRA) for development projects," she said.

The President's call was on top of her move cutting lawmakers' pork barrel or Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) for 2005 by 40 percent.

LIVE/ A4

BIR misses August collection target by 31%

By Carlito Pablo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue suffered a 31-percent shortfall in tax collection last month, prompting Rep. Joey Salceda (Lakas-Kampi, Albay) to call the deficiency one of the "escalating signs of (a) fiscal crisis."

Salceda, chair of the House committee on economic affairs, said the BIR shortfall came "despite increased public pressure for collection efficiency and the much-publicized efforts to prosecute tax cheats."

He said it was "frightening that the gap continues to widen despite BIR's frantic resort to unorthodox methods" such as the BIR's move requiring banks to pay documentary stamp tax in advance.

Another sign of the fiscal crisis is the Bureau of Customs' "unrecognized leakage" of P50 billion a year from under-declared imports, which surfaced at the first hearing by the House ways and means committee.

Rep. Jesli Lapus (NPC, Tarlac), chair of the committee, came up with the estimate based on the admission by Customs Commissioner George Jereos that his agency could be losing 20 percent to 50 percent in potential collections from imports.

"That's already 10 times the P5-billion cut from our pork barrel," Lapus said, eliciting laughter from legislators attending the hearing on the new taxes being proposed by Malacañang.

Preliminary figures showed that the BIR would miss its collection target of P43.1 billion in August, according to Salceda.

He said revenues were expected to

BIR MISSES/ B13

House resolution seeks to put cap on debt payments

By Cynthia D. Balana

LIMITING debt service at levels that will not adversely affect the delivery of basic services has been endorsed in the House of Representatives.

The proposal is contained in House Resolution No. 0002, which calls for the creation of a Congressional Commission on Debt that will conduct an audit of the consolidated public sector debt of at least P5.3 trillion.

Rep. Edcel Lagman (Aksyon Demokratiko, Albay), author of the resolution, said HR 0002 would be the first measure to be tackled for plenary consideration in the House because debt service, according to him, was the principal cause of the fiscal crisis gripping the country.

The resolution will have the full force of a law once approved by Congress.

Lagman said Majority Leader Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City), chair of the House committee on rules, had approved the resolution because of its "critical immediacy."

He noted that debt relief was not among the policy actions the Department of Finance had pre-

HOUSE RESOLUTION/ A5

RP teener 1st 'Struga' laureate

ROGER MARGALLO

YOUNG Filipino poet Angelo Suarez comes home from Macedonia with his trophy.

NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD Filipino poet Angelo V. Suarez is the first laureate of "Bridges of Struga," a new international poetry prize created by the international festival Struga Poetry Evenings in cooperation with the Unesco to reward young poets from all over the world.

Suarez, a fourth-year literature student of the University of Santo Tomas, received the award for his collection of poems, The Nymph of MTV (UST Publishing House). He was chosen from among 24 candidates from 15 Unesco member states.

The prize-giving ceremony was held at the poetry festival from Aug. 25 to 29 in the town of Struga, Macedonia.

Located on the shores of Lake Ohrid, the town is laced with bridges and dotted with delightful architecture—a romantic setting for the world's largest poetry gathering.

The most spectacular evening of the festival is one simply called "Bridges." This is when the poets address the audience with their poetry from the bridge where the Drim river exits from the Ohrid Lake.

In this perfect setting, visitors listen to verses from almost every part of the world including Portugal, the Philippines, the Netherlands, Croatia, Sudan, India,

RP TEENER/ A4

No Time to Waste

JOAN BONDOC

DUMP THE DUMP. Actress Chin Chin Gutierrez leads the International Coalition of Activists in Obando, Bulacan, in a fertility dance cum protest to close the Tanza dump. They claim improper waste disposal impacts the health of children worldwide.

Activist priest urges gov't: Tax El Shaddai

By Volt Contreras, Christine Gaylican and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.,
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

EFFORTS to draw cash from the faithful to help ease the country's fiscal crisis should focus on wealthy Church-backed ministry groups like the El Shaddai and Couples for Christ, activist Catholic priest Robert Reyes said yesterday.

The outspoken clergyman, also known as the "Running Priest," told the INQUIRER that the "trans-parochial" movements could probably be taxed, or else asked to give "surplus funds" to the government.

They were not the Church in themselves, he pointed out, but corporations that practiced tithing among its members, pooled big sums into foundations because these were tax-free, and invested in stocks, bonds and real estate.

Reyes was reacting to a plea aired on Tuesday by Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, head of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, for the faithful, especially the religious community, to help solve the country's financial crisis by giving cash to the government.

ACTIVIST/ A13

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming more frequent over western section of Luzon. Rest of Visayas and Mindanao will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/09/02/04

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

Miriam, Dick clash over power rate hike

By Christine O. Avendaño

WHAT started as a Senate hearing turned into a verbal tussle after two senators, both feisty and outspoken, and incidentally, both lawyers by profession, clashed over the new power rate hikes.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and neophyte Sen. Richard Gordon yesterday engaged in a heated exchange during the Senate energy committee hearing looking into the new power rate increase in Metro Manila.

Still fuming, Gordon later walked out of the hearing.

It all started when Gordon reacted adversely to Santiago's move to remind Energy Regulatory Commission chair Rodolfo Albano to make his reply brief on a query made by Gordon.

Gordon had asked Albano who was going to ultimately bear the costs of the new power rate hike.

Presentation

Santiago, who chairs the energy committee, did so because she said the committee still had to listen to officials of the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) who were set to make their presentation on the 17.37-centavo increase in power rates in the metropolis.

But Gordon told Santiago that other senators had asked questions and he would like to ask his own question.

"All senators have equal rights to ask a question," Gordon said.

Santiago agreed with Gordon's statement but added that as energy committee chair, it was her role to keep the committee in order.

To which Gordon asked whether he was out of order and, if he were, why she thought he was out of order.

"You are violating the schedule of the committee," Santiago replied.

Gordon then insisted he had only asked one question, prompting Santiago to tell Meralco officials to proceed with their presentation.

Lucid interval

"Madame chair, I would like to protest the very dictatorial tendency which perhaps is caused by the lack of the lucid interval at the moment," Gordon shot back.

Santiago countered: "Your honor, we might exchange heated words but to speak of lucid interval is unethical."

Gordon then told Santiago he was not referring to anybody when he used the term "lucid interval."

It was at this point that committee member Sen. Serge Osmeña III intervened and asked for a one-minute suspension of the committee hearing but Santiago asked Meralco officials to proceed with their presentation.

Gordon again insisted that his query to Albano be answered first before Meralco proceeded with the presentation.

At this point, Santiago called for a one-minute suspension of the hearing.

An irate Gordon then stood up and walked around, mumbling at the same time. A grim-faced Santiago, on the other hand, sat in quiet contemplation.

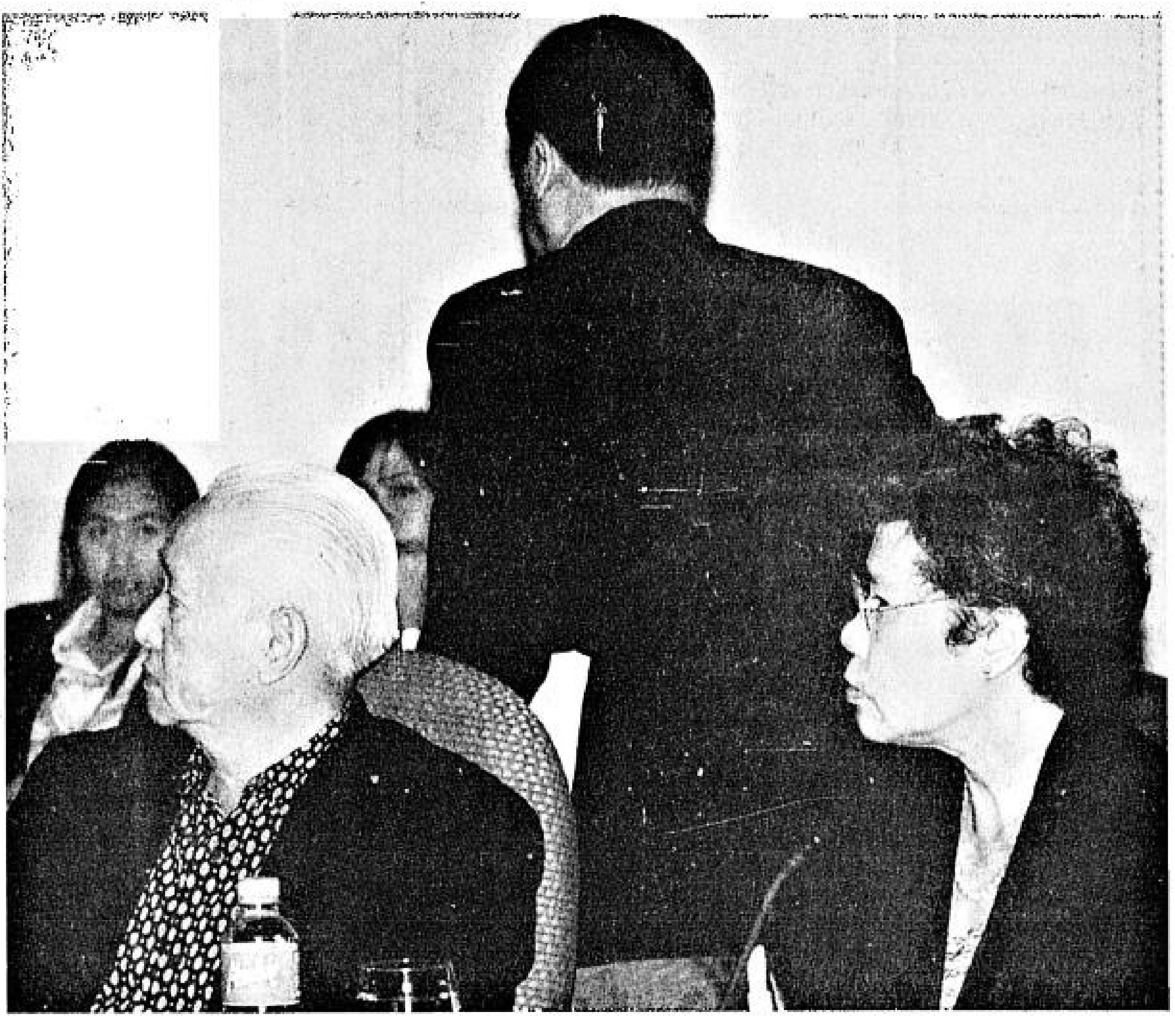
Sen. Lito Lapid, who sat next to Gordon, stood up and tried to pacify the latter. Lapid later told reporters he had asked Gordon to go with him to the executive lounge to have coffee but the latter did not want to do so.

When the hearing resumed, Gordon said he was withdrawing his query to Albano "in the spirit of comity" and in order for Meralco to make its presentation.

Later on, Sen. Alfredo Lim asked that the words "lucid interval" be stricken off the record of the committee, prompting Gordon to explain again that he was not referring this term to anybody.

"I'm sorry if some people felt alluded to that," Gordon said.

In the end, both Santiago and Gordon reconciled in front of television cameras and photographers.



SEN. RICHARD "Dick" Gordon walks out during the Senate hearing on Meralco's power rate increase following a heated argument with Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago (right). At left is Sen. Alfredo Lim.

JESS YUSON

Graft raps filed vs Obet over '₱2-B midnight deal'

By Armand N. Nocum

DURING his last days in government, former Tourism Secretary Roberto Pagdanganan reportedly worked to ratify a deal which gave away Duty Free Philippines' P2-billion chocolate and snack concession to a British Virgin Island-based company.

In a graft complaint filed before the Office of the Ombudsman yesterday, the head of the Duty Free Philippines Employees Association (DFPEA) claimed the deal would result in the government losing P336 million yearly or P1.6 billion in five years when the contract expires.

In a five-page complaint, DFPEA President Alfredo Bautista said the lack of public bidding has not only made the deal illegal, but greatly disadvantageous to the government.

"Why kill the goose that lays the golden eggs?" Bautista asked in a news briefing, claiming that the chocolate and snack concession chalked up an annual gross sale of $40 million or P2.2 billion.

"With the 35 percent profit margin, DFP realizes a gross profit of $14 million or P784 million per year," he said in the complaint.

On the other hand, the July 30 memorandum of agreement between DFP General Manager Michael Christian U. Kho and the Eastern Duty Free (EDF) Management (Services) Ltd. would only result in the government receiving 20 percent of the gross sales as the DFP's "guaranteed net proceeds."

But in a statement, Kho said the contract was transparent and above board.

Kho also described as "malicious" allegations that Pagdanganan ordered him to enter into the deal, saying that the "DFP alone received, evaluated, negotiated, and recommended" the approval of the contract.

"Notably, a 15 percent difference or $6 million or P336 million will figuratively be deprived (sic) annually" from the DFP and the government should the deal push through, Bautista said.

The entire DFP has gross sales of P7.15 billion.

"They have been meeting secretly to ink the deal. We only learned about it when the PTA (Philippine Tourism Authority) board was about to ratify it last week. This smells a lot like a midnight deal to us," said Bautista in a press statement.

According to him, the PTA board even met on Aug. 25 while Typhoon Marce was raging and even after the President suspended the operation of government offices.

Fortunately, he said, other concessionaires learned about the PTA meeting and offered higher bids. This forced the board to order Kho to get EDF to match the price offered by the other concessionaires.

He said Executive Order No. 46, which authorizes the then Ministry of Tourism to "establish a duty free merchandising system" through the PTA, is clear in saying that "In the event that the operation of the stores is to be contracted to private parties, the award therefore shall be done through the usual public bidding."

Noli fails to show up as caretaker at Palace

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE "GOVERNMENT caretaker" was a no-show at the Palace on the first day of President Macapagal-Arroyo's three-day trip to China.

It could have been the weather, or perhaps he did not find anything meaningful to do in Malacañang, but Vice President Noli de Castro did not bother to show up at the first meeting of the caretaker committee early yesterday.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was at a loss to explain De Castro's absence.

"I don't have the answer to that but according to the order of the President, the Vice President will be taking care of ceremonial duties while the administrative duties would be discharged by the Executive Secretary," Bunye said at a briefing.

But Bunye said there was really "no need" for De Castro's physical presence in Malacañang as the President's foreign trip was of short duration.

He said no ceremonial functions were scheduled that would require De Castro's presence.

"It depends on what will come up. We might have visitors who may wish to have an audience with either the President or the Vice President. I'm sure the VP will be very glad to meet these visitors," Bunye said.

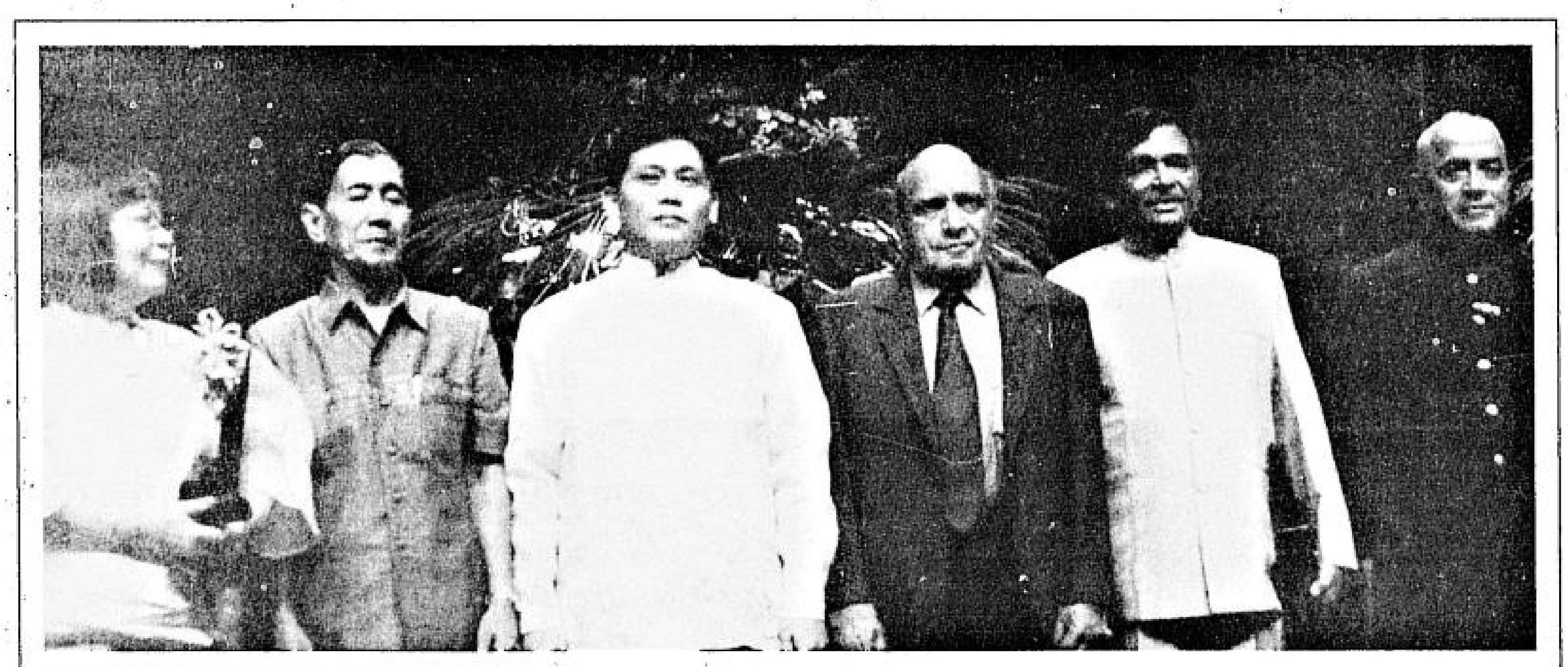
Dale Zapata, De Castro's media coordinator, said the Vice President held meetings in his own office.

She said De Castro was present at the send-off ceremonies for Ms Arroyo at the Villamor Airbase where she boarded a chartered Philippine Airlines flight for Beijing at 6 a.m. yesterday.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita presided at a meeting of the caretaker committee at the Mabini Hall yesterday morning.

Bunye said the meeting was about the "follow-up activities" to the day-long Cabinet workshop held last Tuesday, which Ms Arroyo and De Castro attended together with all the members of the Cabinet.

He said those who attended the caretaker committee meeting were "officials who are holding office in Malacañang."



MAGSAYSAY AWARDEES

Winners of the 2004 Ramon Magsaysay Awards, widely regarded as the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Peace Prize, pose for posterity following the awarding rites. This year's winners include (from left) Haydee Yorac of the Philippines for Government Service, Prayong Ronnarong of Thailand for Community Leadership, Benjamin Abadiano of the Philippines for Emergent Leadership, Ibn Abdur Rehman of Pakistan for Peace and International Understanding, Abdullah Abu Sayeed of Bangladesh for Journalism, Literature and Creative Communication Arts and Laxminarayan Ramdas of India for Peace and International Understanding. Not in photo is Jiang Yanyong of China, who won the award for Public Service. The winners of the awards each receive a medallion and a cash prize.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Gonzalez not inclined to reopen Ninoy case

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE NEW Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said he would himself be quite happy to have the Aquino-Galman double murder case reopened as he believes that some of the soldiers who were convicted for the killings were only "victims of circumstance."

But for the case to be revived, new and credible evidence must first be presented, he said.

Gonzalez said the case would not be a priority under his watch unless new witnesses or evidence is presented.

"You really have to have new evidence. I would be happy if there was one," he said.

The justice secretary said he believed that some of the convicted soldiers were not aware of the military plot to kill Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. on Aug. 21, 1983, adding that they were people who were unfortunate victims of circumstance.

"They were in the wrong place at the wrong time," he said of some of the 15 remaining soldiers convicted for the crime.

Gonzalez, who said he knows the case "like the palm of my hand," said he considers the murders as "unsolved" crimes since the masterminds have not been brought to justice.

Gonzalez prosecuted the case before the Sandiganbayan when he was serving as Tanodbayan, the precursor of the Ombudsman, during the Aquino administration.

He said former President Corazon Aquino was "not happy" with the result of the Sandiganbayan trial in 1990 that found the soldiers guilty because the brains behind the killings were still free.

The Sandiganbayan convicted 16 soldiers for the murders of Aquino and Galman when the case was first reopened after the 1986 Edsa People Power Revolution that toppled the Marcos dictatorship.

The convicts now want the case reopened again. One of them, M/Sgt. Pablo Martinez, even claimed that a close relative of President Aquino was behind the killings.

But Gonzalez said that reopening the case based only on the soldiers' statements was a "long shot" as they have yet to present any new credible evidence.

He said he visited the convicts last year at the New Bilibid Prisons but they did not present any newly discovered evidence.

"They did not say anything that was not already said in the last 20 years," Gonzalez said.

Public Attorney's Office chief Persida Rueda-Acosta, who is handling the convicts' appeal, said her office was still collating the statements of possible witnesses in the case.

RP plans to partially lift Iraq labor ban

THE PHILIPPINE government is considering partially lifting a six-week-old ban on its civilians seeking work in Iraq, officials said Wednesday.

The Philippines banned its nationals from flying to Iraq following the abduction in July of a Filipino truck driver.

Labor Secretary Patricia Santo Tomas said labor and foreign department officials have recommended the partial lifting of the ban amid appeals from the United States.

The officials proposed that Ms Arroyo allow Filipinos to work in two US-run military camps in Baghdad, Camp Anaconda and Camp Victory, Santo Tomas said.

"The president would be the one to decide," Santo Tomas said. Ms Arroyo flew to China for a three-day state visit early Wednesday. *AFP*

NEWSBRIEFS

Flood toll rises to 43

THE DEATH toll from last week's floods in the north has climbed to 43, while one person is still missing, disaster relief officials said yesterday.

Nine other people have been injured and a total of 1.86 million residents in 17 provinces have been affected by destruction brought on by a week of heavy monsoon rains, Civil Defense Administrator Elma Aldea said.

Aldea said of the 43 deaths, 35 had drowned and the others had been electrocuted or buried in mudslides. At least 15 fatalities were children and teenagers, she said.

More than 53,000 people were evacuated to safer grounds as floods engulfed their homes and turned ricefields and roads into virtual lakes and rivers.

As of Wednesday, nearly 28,000 people remained in evacuation centers, officials said. *AP*

NDF, MILF seal alliance

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The communist National Democratic Front and separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front formalized their political alliance by signing a unity statement opposing the joint military exercises with the United States here on Monday.

"We are in a political alliance and cooperation for the common struggle we are waging. We can't give further details on our alliance for these would surely be taken advantage of by our enemies," said the NDF's chief peace negotiator, Luis Jalandoni, who signed the statement for the group.

Maulana Alonto, a member of the MILF peace panel, signed the unity statement for the MILF separatist group.

They said that with the joint military exercises, known as the Balikatan (Shoulder to Shoulder), the US was interfering in the peace talks with the MILF and the NDF. *Grace Cantal-Albasin, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Estrada seeks return of defense lawyers

AS THE new deadline for the presentation of evidence nears, jailed ex-President Estrada has asked the Sandiganbayan antigraft court to allow the return of the nine-person defense team that he fired two years ago.

Estrada said in a motion that he now wanted the panel led by lawyer Rene Saguisag to represent him in place of his four court-appointed lawyers.

The motion, filed yesterday, may result in the delay of the resumption of Estrada's plunder trial set for Sept. 6, because Estrada said his lawyers should be given more time to rearrange their schedules.

"I plan to reengage Atty. Saguisag as lead counsel, who is asking for more time," said Estrada, who is facing plunder and perjury charges before the antigraft court.

But Saguisag said he was "not really inclined" to rejoin Estrada's defense team, citing "problems" involving the twice-a-week marathon hearings. *Armand N. Nocum*

S OP
KILLING
OURNALISTS

MEDIA KILLINGS
Filomena Legaspi-Rosales, wife of slain RTC judge Voltaire Rosales, breaks down as she recounts the last day of her husband during a hearing of joint committees of public order, illegal drugs and human rights regarding Task Force Newsman. JESS YUSON

Talks to settle Naia terminal 3 row set

EXPLORATORY talks have been set for next week with the consortium that built the annulled Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 project for a possible settlement, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo said yesterday.

Benipayo said the government would want to know if the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) is agreeable to the government's preconditions for any settlement on the $650-million project.

The preconditions include a "thorough inspection" of the terminal to make sure that it is structurally sound and safe for air commuters and an independent audit to determine its "actual and reasonable cost," Benipayo said.

"You cannot buy a house without looking inside it first. There should be no talks about a settlement without finding out first if the terminal is structurally sound," he said.

In May 2003, the Supreme Court annulled Piatco's contract for Terminal 3 for violations of the Anti-Dummy Law and the build-operate-transfer (BOT) law. The high court said the government was legally allowed to take over the terminal because of Piatco's violations.

Piatco and its German-based partner, Fraport, brought separate international arbitration suits in Singapore and the United States against the government as a result of the decision.

Because of the impasse, the new terminal has been mothballed indefinitely.

Piatco is asking the government for at least $520 million in compensation for the construction of the terminal. The government has offered to pay $350 million, which the company declined.

Benipayo said government representatives had met with Piatco and Fraport officials but nothing came of the talks because Piatco failed to take any steps to fulfill the government's preconditions.

Benipayo said Piatco had locked out the government from the facility. Despite repeated requests, it has refused to allow inspection of the terminal or to open its financial books, he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered that all discussions on the terminal be conducted only on a "lawyer-to-lawyer basis" between the government's counsel—Benipayo, Justice Florentino Feliciano and the international law firm White and Case—and the lawyers of Piatco and Fraport.

"While the government is prepared to listen carefully to good faith proposals leading to possible settlement, it has to be made clear that the government is under no obligation to take over and pay for the terminal," Benipayo said.

He said the terminal was built under the built-operate-transfer scheme "precisely because government lacked the necessary financial resources to build it."

He said that if government were to opt for spending public money to operate the terminal, it would do so only after determining the true condition of Terminal 3 "and of what actually and reasonably went into the construction thereof, and the requirements of the best interests of the country and in the spirit of full transparency and accountability."

Piatco is 60-percent owned by the Chinese-Filipino Cheng family, 30 percent by Fraport and 10 percent by the Japan-based Nissho Iwai. Piatco said it owes $350 million to Takenaka International Corp., the Japanese company contracted to build the facility. *Philip C. Tubeza*

Planned closure of RP consulate on Sundays irks Pinay maids in HK

HONG KONG—Filipino maids in Hong Kong expressed anger Wednesday at a cost-saving proposal to close their consulate on Sundays—the only day many domestic helpers can go there.

Hong Kong's thousands of Filipino maids work six days a week and they viewed it as a major victory two years ago when the Philippine Consulate General began opening on Sundays to make it easier for them to conduct business there.

The acting head of a group representing migrant workers said the leaders of 96 local Filipino organizations have expressed their frustration with the proposal, which was outlined in a questionnaire sent to Filipinos.

"It is an outrageous proposal," said Vicky Casia-Cabantac of the Migrante sectoral party. But she attributed it to the fact that "our government is bankrupt" and could save money by closing on Sundays.

No one from the consulate immediately returned a phone call from the Associated Press.

More than 120,000 Filipinos are employed as domestic helpers in Hong Kong, where they are paid little by local standards but can earn enough money to support families back home. AP

Quake rocks Mindanao

A MODERATE earthquake rocked the eastern section of Mindanao early Wednesday, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage, officials said.

The 5.6-magnitude quake was centered in waters off Davao Oriental province's Mati town, about 1,100 kilometers southeast of Manila, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said.

Phivolcs said the temblor, which was also felt in southern Baganga town and nearby Davao City, could have been caused by the movement of tectonic plates. No damage or aftershocks were expected, the institute said.

The Philippines is along the so-called Pacific "Ring of Fire," where earthquakes and volcanic activity are common.

A magnitude 7.7 earthquake in 1990 killed nearly 2,000 people on the main northern island of Luzon. AP

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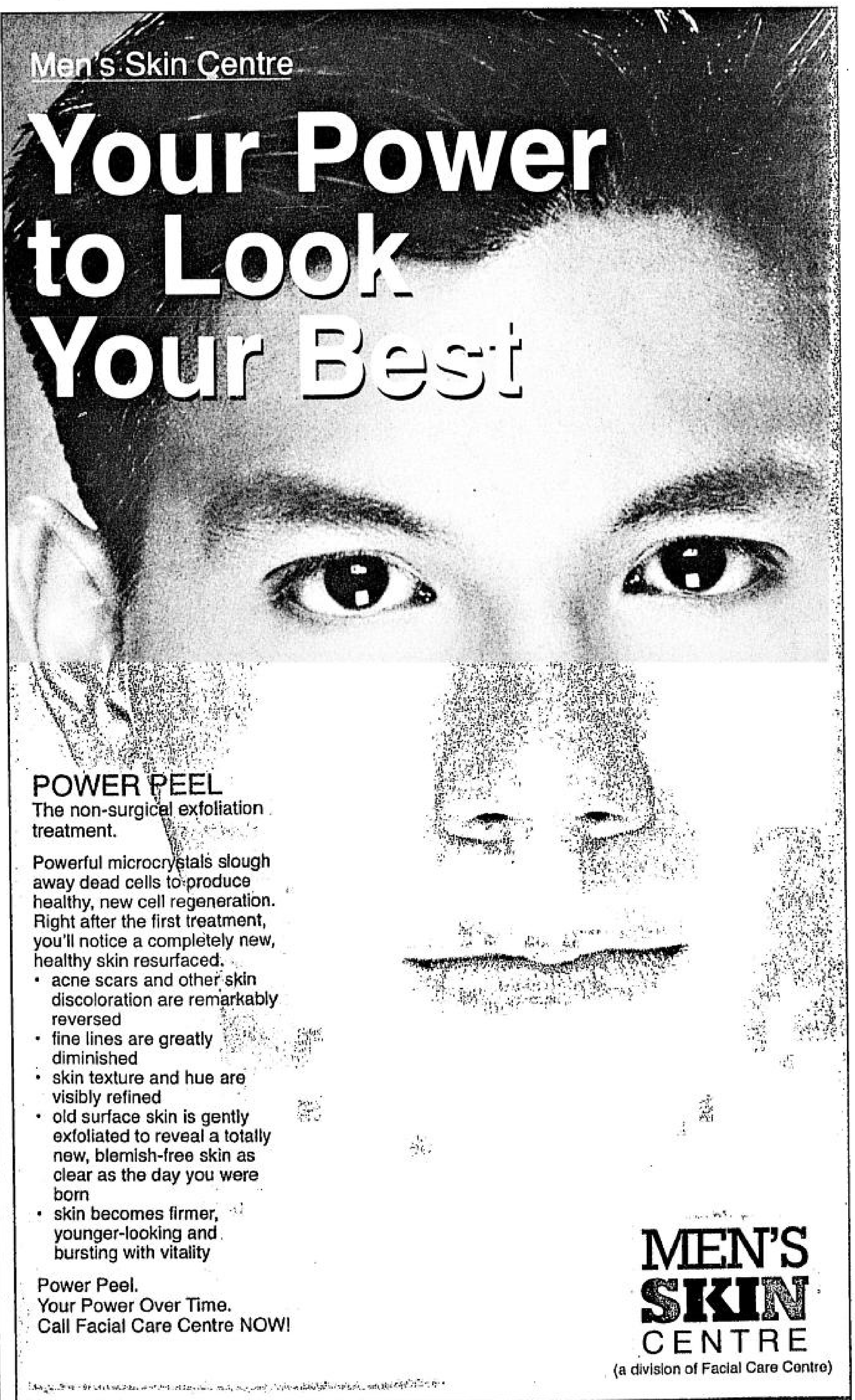
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By TJ Burgonio

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From page A1

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Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

RP teener 1st 'Struga' laureate

From page A1

Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, Peru and Macedonia.

This year's 43rd edition of the Struga Poetry Evenings was attended by some 20 poets and this year's laureates—Golden Wreath winner Vasco Graca Moura, and young poets Suarez and Petko Dabeski.

Moura is a leading contemporary poet of the Portuguese language. He has published more than 60 books (poetry, prose, essays and literary translations) and has won a great many distinctions including the 1995 Pessoa Prize.

In a press conference before the start of the poetry fest, Suarez said that he felt privileged to participate in a prestigious event with Moura.

"I am excited and nervous to sit at the same table with Vasco Graça Moura. With all due respect to the older poets, I believe young poets have enormous potential, especially authors from the Philippines. Young poets who have something to say should be given space to do so," he said.

Early this year, the Unesco paid tribute to Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), laureate of the 1971 Nobel Prize for Literature who also received "The Golden Crown of Struga," alongside poets such as Rafael Alberti (Spain), Yehuda Amichai (Israel), W. H. Auden (United States), Makoto Ooka (Japan), Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal) and Andreï Voznesenski (Russian Federation).

Poetry in the park

The idea for establishing of the Struga Poetry Evenings was born in Struga on July 15, 1961. A group of Macedonian authors decided to celebrate the centennial of the publication of the Collection of Folk Songs, prepared by Miladinov brothers.

Soon afterwards, at one of its meetings, the National Board of the Struga district appointed the first festival council consisting of seven members. Its first president was the poet Aco Shopov.

The poetry festival traditionally begins with the poem of Konstantin Miladinov "T'ga za Jug" (Sorrow/Longing for the South), after which the poets-participants gather in the House of Poetry in Struga.

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From page A1

Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, Peru and Macedonia.

This year's 43rd edition of the Struga Poetry Evenings was attended by some 20 poets and this year's laureates—Golden Wreath winner Vasco Graca Moura, and young poets Suarez and Petko Dabeski.

Moura is a leading contemporary poet of the Portuguese language. He has published more than 60 books (poetry, prose, essays and literary translations) and has won a great many distinctions including the 1995 Pessoa Prize.

In a press conference before the start of the poetry fest, Suarez said that he felt privileged to participate in a prestigious event with Moura.

"I am excited and nervous to sit at the same table with Vasco Graça Moura. With all due respect to the older poets, I believe young poets have enormous potential, especially authors from the Philippines. Young poets who have something to say should be given space to do so," he said.

Early this year, the Unesco paid tribute to Chilean poet Pablo Neruda (1904-1973), laureate of the 1971 Nobel Prize for Literature who also received "The Golden Crown of Struga," alongside poets such as Rafael Alberti (Spain), Yehuda Amichai (Israel), W. H. Auden (United States), Makoto Ooka (Japan), Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal) and Andreï Voznesenski (Russian Federation).

Poetry in the park

The idea for establishing of the Struga Poetry Evenings was born in Struga on July 15, 1961. A group of Macedonian authors decided to celebrate the centennial of the publication of the Collection of Folk Songs, prepared by Miladinov brothers.

Soon afterwards, at one of its meetings, the National Board of the Struga district appointed the first festival council consisting of seven members. Its first president was the poet Aco Shopov.

The poetry festival traditionally begins with the poem of Konstantin Miladinov "T'ga za Jug" (Sorrow/Longing for the South), after which the poets-participants gather in the House of Poetry in Struga.

House resolution seeks to put cap on debt payments

From page A1

sented at a briefing before the House committee on ways and means to address the fiscal crisis.

Automatic debt appropriation

Under Executive Order No. 292, debt payments get priority over other expenses.

EO No. 92, which then President Corazon Aquino signed in 1987, affirmed the "automatic appropriation" of debt payments from the national budget that was originally mandated by Presidential Decree No. 1177 of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Interest payments will be the biggest government expense next year, accounting for 33 percent of the proposed P907.5-billion budget.

Including payments on the loan principal, debt service will eat up 94 percent of government revenues in 2005, according to Rep. Joey Salceda (Kampi-Lakas, Albay). Sen. Ralph Recto placed the total debt service at P647.9 billion.

Another resolution filed by Rep. Eduardo Zialcita (Lakas, Parañaque) urging the House committee on appropriations to make a debt audit was consolidated with the one filed by Lagman.

Zialcita said bicameral action on the debt program would be "more expeditious and efficacious."

The bicameral body, to be composed of six representatives and six senators, has one year to discharge its functions and powers, according to Lagman.

Debt relief for the Third World

For his part, Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said he would propose an expanded debt relief strategy for the Philippines and other Third World countries during his speech before a conference of 101 political parties in China and Asia in Beijing tomorrow.

The 3rd Asian political parties conference in Beijing, of which De Venecia is the founding chair, will be attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Speaker said the proposal, which he also made to the United Nations, would be submitted for consideration by governments in Asia, the United Nations, and the G-7 countries.

"All of these problems that we are talking about—battle against poverty, battle against terrorism, fiscal crisis, foreign exchange crisis and oil crisis—require foreign exchange," De Venecia said.

"It is because we cannot service our debt comfortably that we have the beginnings of a fiscal crisis.

Scattered records

The country has no main database on the total debt of the country because records are scattered in the different departments of the government, according to Rep. Rolando Andaya Jr. (Liberal Party, Camarines Sur), chair of the House committee on appropriations.

Andaya said there was a need to put up a main database so that Congress could effectively monitor government borrowings and payments.

Rep. Robert "Ace" Barbers (Lakas, Surigao del Norte) said the House must be at the forefront of looking into the government borrowing and lending spree.

"We should really strictly monitor all the lending, all these borrowings that the national government is engaged in," he said.

In the case of the debts of government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), Andaya urged the President to issue an executive order creating a Risk Management Office that would conduct an inventory of maturing debts.

SALCEDA

Andaya noted that there was no single office, which has an accounting of all the liabilities of the GOCCs.

A big part of the public sector debt represents the liabilities of GOCCs.

The Senate has threatened to cut P106.7 billion from the proposed General Appropriations Act for 2005.

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said the "real" budget was more than the P907 billion submitted by Malacañang to Congress, which he said, only accounted for programmed expenditures.

He said Malacañang did not submit P35 billion for unprogrammed expenditures, another P35 billion for accounts payable for 2004, and P36.7 billion for the interest expense of liabilities assumed form the National Power Corp.

Andaya said the unprogrammed expenditures may not have been included in the Malacañang proposed budget so as not to increase the budget deficit.

"Like the senators, my point is to have actual expenditures in one box in the interest of transparency. We should not artificially deflate spending levels," he said.

Andaya said there was nothing more to cut from the budget as doing so would already "hit the root."

"If you minus the so-called P106.7 billion from the P907 billion, it will be a catastrophe. We will have to fire people, close schools and hospitals, and tell the Army to go home and plant camote," he said.

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Attackers with bomb belts seize Russian school

MOSCOW—More than a dozen attackers bearing guns and wrapped in suicide-bomb belts seized an elementary school in the Russian region of North Ossetia Wednesday morning and were holding hundreds of hostages, including some 200 children.

The seizure took place on the first day of the Russian school year, when a large number of parents had accompanied their children to class. Reports said the raid took place just after a ceremony marking the school year's start, when the attackers drove up in a covered truck of the type often used for troop transport.

Gunfire broke out after the raid and at least three teachers and two police officers were wounded, said Alexei Polyansky, a police spokesperson for southern Russia. More gunfire and several explosions were heard about three hours later, the Interfax news agency reported.

The Itar-Tass news agency, citing regional emergency officials, said about 400 people including some 200 children were being held captive. A regional police official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the hostages had been herded into the school gymnasium.

For the second time in a week, President Vladimir Putin interrupted his working holiday in the Black Sea resort of Sochi and returned to Moscow. Last week, Putin also had to hurry back after two Russian airliners crashed near simultaneously in what authorities said were terrorist bombings. Upon arrival at the Moscow airport, Putin held an immediate meeting with the heads of Russia's Ministry of Interior and the Federal Security Service, the Interfax news agency said.

The attackers warned Wednesday that they would blow up the school if police tried to storm it and demanded talks with regional officials and a well-known pediatrician, Leonid Roshal, who had aided hostages during the seizure of a Moscow theater in 2002, Polyansky said.

They demanded the release of fighters detained in connection with a series of attacks on police facilities in neighboring Ingushetia in June, the Itar-Tass reported, citing regional officials. The well-coordinated raids killed more than 90 people.

In footage from outside the school in the town of Beslan on television channel NTV, men in camouflage with heavy-caliber machine guns took up positions on the perimeter and other men in civilian dress with light automatic rifles paced nervously. Polyanksy said that the hostage-takers—most wearing suicide-bomb belts—were placing children in the windows in a bid to prevent authorities from storming the building. He also said the hostage-takers had placed a sniper on an upper floor.

At one point, a girl of about 7 in a floral print dress and a red bow in her hair streaked around a corner apparently after fleeing from the school, her hand held by a flak-jacketed soldier, followed by an older woman. Russian news reports said that some 50 students managed to escape, some after hiding in the school's boiler room during the raid.

Interfax, citing Ismel Shaov, a regional spokesperson for the Federal Security Service, said there were 17 attackers, both male and female. *AP*

Muscovites distraught by subway suicide blast

MOSCOW—Moscow commuters distraught by a suicide bombing near a subway stop that killed 10 people laid a phalanx of flowers near the station entrance on Wednesday and police promised heightened security on the sprawling city's transit system.

The attack came just a week after two Russian planes carrying 90 people crashed almost simultaneously in what officials say where terrorist bombings.

"In essence, war has been declared on us, where the enemy is unseen and there is no front," said Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, according to the Interfax-Military News Agency. He was speaking before the school seizure in southern Russia.

Doctors labored through the night to save the lives of people severely wounded by the bomb that officials said was packed with bolts and other small hardware in order to maximize casualties. In all, 51 people were wounded and 49 of them hospitalized, officials said.

The Federal Security Service said the blast had the equivalent of two kilograms of TNT.

A few hours earlier, the Supreme Court had turned down the appeal of Zarema Muzhakhoyeva, convicted in an aborted suicide bombing attempt at a Moscow restaurant last year. A police sapper was killed while trying to defuse the bomb.

Mayor Yuri Luzhkov told reporters near the Rizhskaya subway stop in northern Moscow that Tuesday evening's female bomber was walking toward the station but saw two police officers there, turned around "and decided to destroy herself in a crowd of people." *AP*

PROTESTERS attack a burning mosque in Katmandu to protest the killing of 12 Nepalese hostages by Iraqi militants. AP

Killing of 12 hostages sparks mosque burning

KATMANDU—Thousands of demonstrators ransacked a mosque and clashed with police in the capital Wednesday to protest the killing of 12 Nepalese hostages by Iraqi militants.

Hours after the rioting broke out, the government imposed a curfew in Katmandu.

"We want revenge," protesters shouted as they stormed the Jama mosque—the only Muslim house of worship in the capital. They broke windows and set fire to carpets, furniture and parts of the building, which was empty at the time.

Police fired tear gas in an unsuccessful attempt to disperse the mob.

In other parts of Katmandu, protesters blamed the government for not doing enough to secure the release of the 12 Nepalese contract workers, who were slain by their Iraqi captors. The angry mob stoned buildings and blocked traffic by burning tires on main intersections.

The offices of many agencies that send workers abroad also were attacked.

The government responded by imposing an indefinite curfew in Katmandu, saying the lives and property of residents had to be protected.

A gruesome video posted on a website on Tuesday showed militants slitting the neck of one Nepalese worker and shooting 11 others. They disappeared soon after entering Iraq from Jordan on Aug. 19.

Nepal condemned the killings as a "heinous crime against the innocent civilians."

"This barbarian act of terrorism to kill innocent civilians without asking for any conditions for their release is against the minimum behavior of human civilization," the government said in a statement.

Guerrillas in Iraq have taken more than 100 foreigners hostage in recent months, often demanding that their home countries withdraw troops from the US-led coalition or pull out their citizens doing civilian work. Some have demanded that a hostage's employer promise to halt all business here. *AP*

Israel Army demolishes house of one bomber

BEERSHEVA, Israel—The Israeli Army on Wednesday blew up the home of one of two suicide bombers who killed 16 people and wounded more than 80 on two Israeli buses in the deadliest Palestinian attack in nearly a year.

Troops dynamited the two-story home of Ahmad Qawasmeh, 22, and were preparing to demolish the house of Nassim Jabari, also 22, according to an AFP journalist on the scene.

Their attack in the southern town of Beersheva Tuesday, which was claimed by the Islamist group Hamas, came hours after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon unveiled an accelerated time-table for pulling settlers and troops out of the Gaza Strip as part of a larger project to separate Israel from the Palestinians.

"The latest toll we have is that 16 people are dead, as well as the two bombers," a police source said.

A spokesperson for Beersheva's Soroka hospital said that 18 wounded, including three with serious injuries, were still in hospital Wednesday morning.

Police said one bomber had boarded each of the buses moments before the explosions in the city center.

"This attack was carried out by two suicide bombers who carried their charges for three minutes on the buses before blowing themselves up," one source said.

The explosions went off shortly before 3 p.m. near the city hall, completely destroying one of the buses and setting ablaze the second which was just 100 meters away.

Police spokesperson Gil Kleiman said no specific alerts had been received prior to the blasts but that there had been "general warnings." *AFP*

US first lady hails husband's war on terror

NEW YORK—Republican National Convention co-stars Laura Bush and Arnold Schwarzenegger commended President George W. Bush to the country on Tuesday night for four more years, hailing him as a man of strength and compassion. "You can count on him, especially in a crisis," said the first lady.

"He's a man of perseverance. He's a man of inner strength. He is a leader who doesn't flinch, doesn't waver, does not back down," the Austrian-born California governor added in remarks that blended high praise for the president with assurances to immigrants that the party welcomes them.

"We Republicans admire your ambition. We encourage your dreams. We believe in your future," said the governor, one of a series of speakers on an evening scripted to show the softer side of a party known for its conservatism.

Schwarzenegger and the first lady were taking their turns at the Madison Square Garden podium as 2,508 delegates formally bestowed their nomination on the president for a second term in office. "Four more years," they chanted in unison.

Polls show a virtual tie between Bush and his Democratic challenger, Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts. The election is Nov. 2.

Republicans met inside their heavily fortified convention hall as police made nearly 1,000 arrests in the surrounding streets on a day heavy with protests. By evening, authorities wrapped an entire midtown Manhattan block in orange netting as they worked to contain demonstrators who vowed to march on the Madison Garden itself.

Bush campaigned across three "battleground" states during the day and worked to extinguish a convention-week controversy of his own making. "In this different kind of war, we may never sit down at a peace table. But make no mistake about it, we are winning, and we will win" the war on terror, he told an American Legion convention in Tennessee, one day after saying he didn't think victory would be possible.

"I probably needed to be more articulate" in earlier comments, he conceded in a radio interview with conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh. *AP*

US first lady Laura Bush addresses the delegates at the Republican National Convention at Madison Square Garden in New York City on Aug. 31. AFP

Kerry: US can win antiterrorism war

NASHVILLE, Tennessee—Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry says President George W. Bush was wrong when he suggested that victory against terrorism might be impossible, declaring that he has a plan to defeat those who threaten the United States.

In a speech to the American Legion on Wednesday, Kerry was highlighting Bush's recent admission that his administration "miscalculated" how fiercely insurgents would fight after the initial "catastrophic success" of US troops in Iraq, campaign advisers said. And he was taking issue with the doubts Bush raised about whether the war on terror can be won.

"Let me tell you something: We can, we must and we will win the war on terror," Kerry said at a rally late Tuesday as he arrived in Nashville for his appearance.

Also on Wednesday, Kerry's campaign will begin buying $45 million worth of commercial time in 20 states through Election Day. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Explosions rock Iraq council meet

BAGHDAD—Several mortar rounds exploded near the convention center where delegates to Iraq's new National Council met for the first time Wednesday inside the heavily guarded Green Zone, wounding one person, the US military said. Several shells exploded near a checkpoint outside and an hour later, two rounds landed in the Green Zone itself, sending up a plume of gray smoke, said Lt. Col. Steven Boylan, a spokesperson for the US-led coalition's press information center. *AP*

Key al-Qaida operative arrested

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan has arrested a key Egyptian al-Qaida operative who holds a senior position within the terrorist network, a security official said Wednesday. The official, asking to remain anonymous, identified the suspect as Sharif al-Misri and said his capture carried a significant reward. "He is one of the top operators in al-Qaida's hierarchy," said the official. "Al-Misri is among the top 25 on the list of most wanted al-Qaida terrorists." *AFP*

Ex-PM Thatcher posts bail for son

LONDON—Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has agreed to post bail of 350,000 pounds ($628,000) to free her son Mark from house arrest in South Africa, the Times newspaper reported Wednesday. Sir Mark Thatcher, a 51-year-old businessman, was arrested in Cape Town a week ago on suspicion of helping to finance an alleged coup bid in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea. He denies the allegation. The Times said Baroness Thatcher, 78, had agreed to help her son after a telephone conversation on her return to Britain from a holiday in the United States on Aug. 27. "The money will be paid within 36 hours," it said. Baroness Thatcher, known as the Iron Lady when her Conservatives were in power in the 1980s, has made no public comment on her son's situation. *AFP*

'A sheer mutilation of justice'

THE HAGUE, Netherlands—Slobodan Milosevic attacked a prosecution theory on Wednesday that he sought to carve out an ethnically pure "greater Serbia" in the broken Yugoslav federation, and branded the war crimes indictments against him "a sheer mutilation of justice." More than two and a half years after the trial of the former Yugoslav president began at the UN tribunal, Milosevic wound up his opening statement that began Tuesday as he laid out a series of complex conspiracies against his Serb people involving the Kosovo Liberation Army, Osama bin Laden, the Vatican, Croatian neo-Nazis and the CIA, among others. Milosevic called his trial "a farce, pure and simple." Charging that prosecutors had failed to prove any of the charges, he called the indictments "a sum of unscrupulous manipulation, lies, crippling of the law, and an unjust presentation of the history." *AP*

Palace defends temporary appointments

PIMENTEL

CEBU CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has the authority to issue temporary appointments contrary to the view of Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Pimentel claimed that Cabinet secretaries who had been appointed in an acting capacity were not legally allowed to assume the functions of their office until their appointments are confirmed by the congressional Commission on Appointments.

Bunye, who is a lawyer, said the President's power to issue temporary appointments derived from the Administrative Code.

He said the power of the President to make temporary appointments was affirmed by the Supreme Court in 1991 in the Achacosa v. Macaraig case.

"I believe this should put to rest the objections being made by Pimentel. The only way this appointment can be validly contested is if the good senator files a case in court," Bunye told reporters here on Monday.

Bunye explained that Section 17 of the Administrative Code provides that the President may temporarily designate an officer already in the government service or any other competent person to perform the functions of an office in the executive branch if the officer regularly appointed to the office is unable to perform his duties by reason of illness, absence or any other cause or if there exists a vacancy.

He said the purpose of the law was to prevent an interruption in the performance of public service.

The only exception to this provision is in the case of temporary appointments to a constitutional commission which is specifically prohibited by the Constitution.

The President cannot issue acting appointments to the Commission on Appointments, the Civil Service Commission or the Commission on Audit, Bunye said. *Connie E. Fernandez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

RP to buy 200 CNG-run passenger buses from China

THE PHILIPPINES is to import 200 buses from China that would run using compressed natural gas (CNG), Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said.

An agreement for the purchase of the vehicles is to be signed during President Macapagal-Arroyo's two-day state visit to China beginning Wednesday, Perez said without giving further details.

The government earlier said it would acquire 900 CNG-run passenger buses to ply routes in Manila as the country moves to alternative fuels amid rising crude prices and deteriorating air quality in the metropolis.

Perez said operators of the $4.5-billion Malampaya natural gas project off the northern coast of Palawan island have already committed to offer substantial discounts to operators of the 200 CNG buses.

"They will sell the natural gas at only P11 per liter for a period of seven years. This is way below the P21 per liter price of diesel," Perez said. *AFP*

Marine experts cite RP's rich biodiversity

A GLOBAL study of marine biodiversity has identified the Philippines as having the richest array of underwater creatures and plants in the entire planet, an environmental advocacy group reported yesterday.

World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines said the country has been cited as the "world's epicenter" of marine life in a 10-year study conducted by a team of experts led by Kent Carpenter, a biology professor at the Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.

"Scientists have long known that the area in Southeast Asia that includes Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines hold the richest marine biodiversity. I was surprised to discover that the extreme center of this biodiversity is in the Philippines, rather than closer to the equator," the WWF quoted Carpenter as saying.

Philippine waters are teeming with so much life that they may "hold the key to unraveling" the origins of marine species and how they had adapted through time in oceans around the world, the professor added.

The study was conducted for the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization and is considered the largest and most accurate database on marine life available.

Carpenter will arrive in the Philippines on Sept. 11 and will give a seminar about his study on Sept. 14 at the National Museum, the WWF said. *Volt Contreras*

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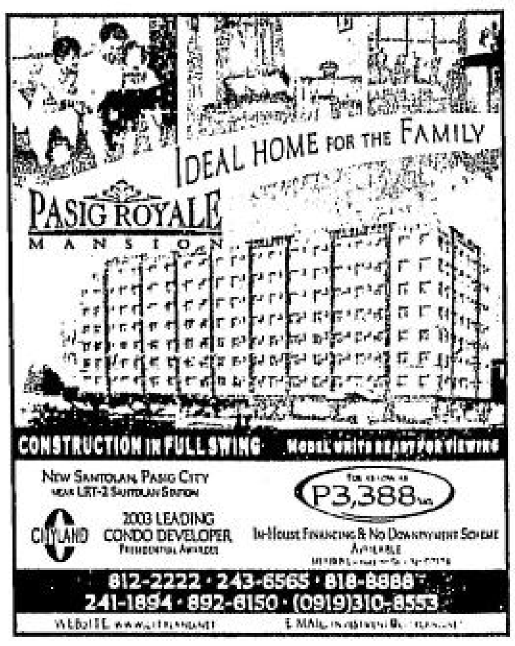
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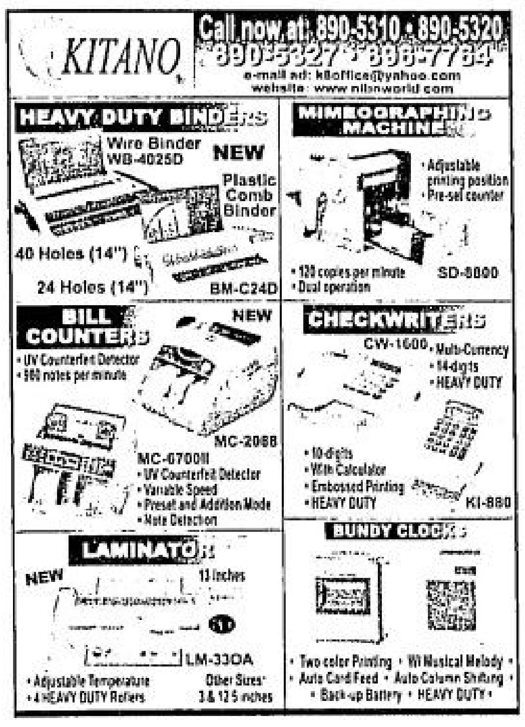
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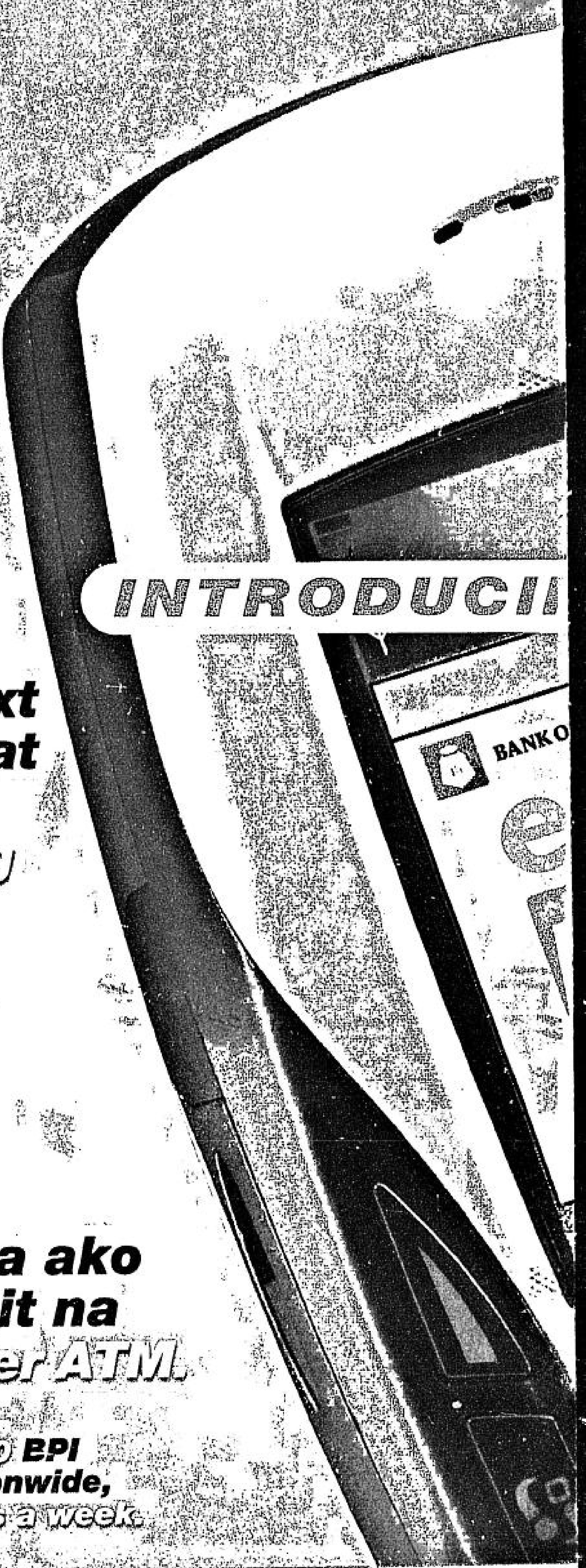
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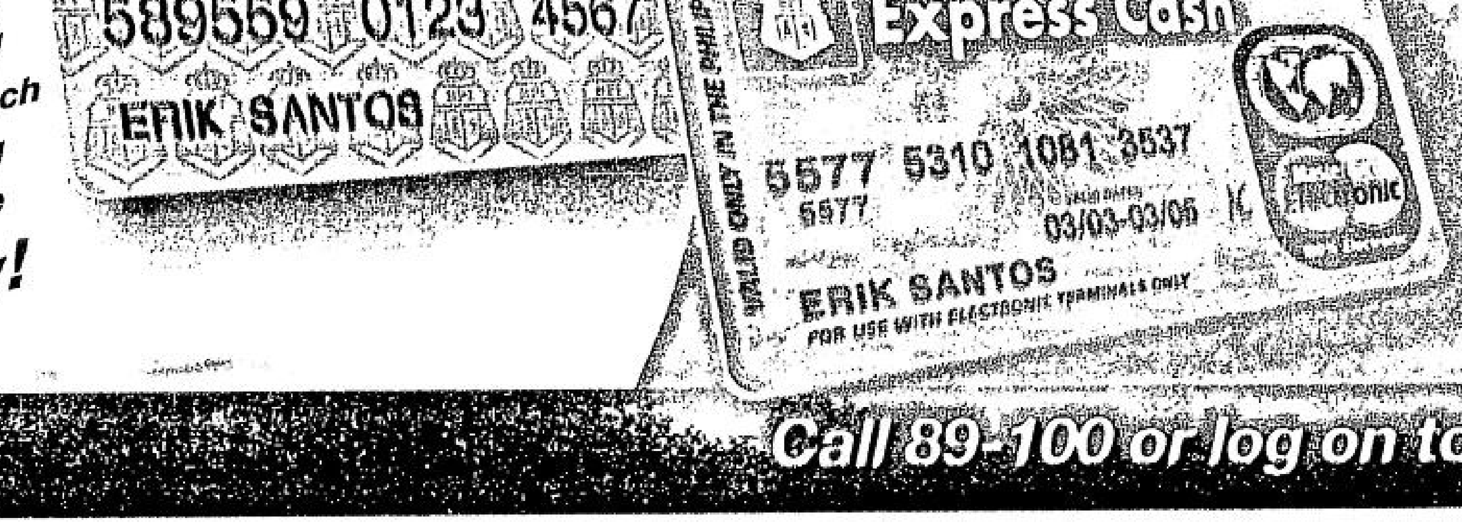
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

OPINION

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•100% soy ink•

Publisher **Isagani Yambot**
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Sacrifice

EDITORIAL

PRIESTS and religious should practice what they preach. Even as they urge the Catholic faithful to help stave off economic collapse, the members of the clergy themselves should "set an example of sharing" by giving up one month's allowance and donating it to the government, Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla said Monday. The amount collected may not add up to much, said the president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, but the gesture might "influence people who are rich but greedy and insensitive to the common welfare."

Capalla's call came a day after members of the Silliman University High School Class of 1962 gave up their rings, earrings and other pieces of jewelry during their reunion in Dumaguete City, also to help narrow the huge government budget deficit. "This will probably add to just a small amount, but it comes from our hearts," said the class president, Bais City Mayor Hector Villanueva. If every Filipino were to follow the example by giving small amounts of money, he said, "it would translate to a very big sum."

Perhaps. But it will hardly be enough to make a small dent on the huge public sector debt of P5.39 trillion.

More than the sums collected, however, what is of great moment is what these private-sector initiatives show: a clear understanding of the magnitude of the debt problem, a sense of urgency in dealing with it, and a readiness to take up part of the burden of solving it. And yet these very same things that animate the citizens' approach to the looming financial crisis seem to be lacking from our officials' response.

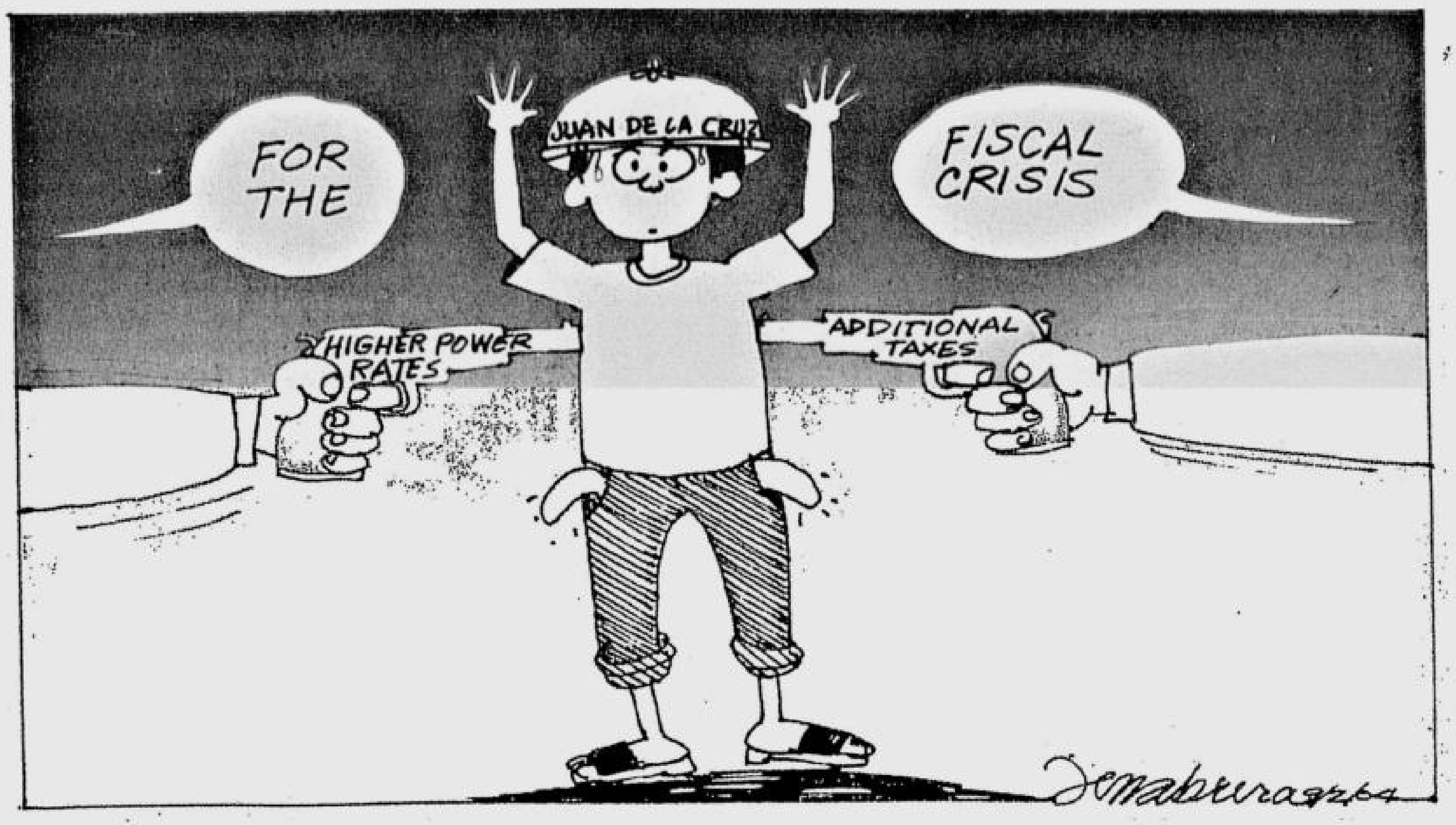
To this day, officials in both the executive and legislative branches of our government are debating who is to blame for the monstrous public debt and who will give up what and how much to lighten the load. It is as if they haven't heard the dire warning made by the 11 professors from the UP School of Economics: We have two years—or at the most three—to put our economic house in order or the whole thing crumbles. And we have one year to show we are making a serious effort to avert a crisis, or our creditors will help hasten its approach.

While ordinary citizens are taking the warning seriously and doing what they can to stave off a disaster, the people who can do the most to solve the problem seem content to offer token solutions. The *merienda* in Malacañang may be simple and spare, but the table gets bigger as President Macapagal-Arroyo continues to expand her Cabinet by creating new offices with funny names and filling them with political appointees. She has ordered restrictions on the use of government vehicles, but wants a bigger budget for foreign travel. She proposes to lop off 20 percent of the budget allocation of local government units which deal directly with the people, but winks indulgently as the members of Congress decide to keep most of their pork barrel.

In Congress, four senators have given up their P200-million pork barrel, nine have offered to give up half of the amount, while the rest seem bent on keeping all of theirs. Members of the House of Representatives are said to have agreed to give up 38 percent of their P65-million pork barrel for the year, though some are grumbling that they never agreed to do so.

Heeding the call of Speaker Jose de Venecia for more sacrifice, 37 congressmen have donated one month's salary, or P35,000 each, to a fund that will be used to build classrooms and buy computers for public school children. But the suspicion lingers that this is all for show. Except for the Speaker, no one has called for the lawmakers to give up what was theirs. The clamor that grew louder after the President said the nation was in crisis was for the lawmakers to give up their pork barrel so that the government can save at least P20 billion a year. The call was not for them to give up what was rightfully theirs, including their salaries, but for them to surrender what wasn't theirs. Why did they choose to "sacrifice" what is theirs? Simple: what they earn as salary is peanuts compared to the kickbacks they will get even from their smaller pork barrel.

The donations being made by priests and private citizens are what make people believe in our nation's redemption. The "sacrifice" being offered by our officials is of a different kind. And we call them public servants?



Eggs and bad news

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"BREAK eggs and bad news gently." Those who prefer disagreeable reports served in calibrated driblets groused that this proverb was fractured twice within a week.

First, 11 University of the Philippines faculty members published a candid 28-page study titled "The Deepening Crisis: The Real Score on Deficits and Public Debts." They document "The Big Bang" that we were warned would threaten after the elections.

Today, the country flounders in a quagmire of imploding debts and compounding deficits. Unless corrected, an Argentina meltdown is two, maybe three, years away, the UP School of Economics paper asserts. We have "possibly a year, at most, to convince financial markets (the country) is doing something to reverse the situation."

Second, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo weighed in. We're in a fiscal crisis now, she flatly declared.

"Human kind," T.S. Eliot writes in "Four Quartets," "cannot bear very much reality." A people perpetually locked into fiesta governance needed that double-dose of reality. Sedated by dole-outs, hooked on entertainment, we stave off hard decisions—until the crash. Shrinks call that the denial syndrome.

So, we partied while government's IOUs ratcheted to P3.36 trillion. Out of every peso earned, 78 centavos were *vales*. We spent money that wasn't there. About P200 billion in red ink will swamp this year's budget. Taxes collected plummeted, from 17 percent of gross domestic product in 1997 to only 12.5 percent last year.

"Phase One—the period of denial—is over," former national treasurer Leonor Briones said. Is it? Look at the initial reactions.

The shrillest arguments swirl around the notorious congressional pork barrel. Anguished congressmen trimmed their pork by 38 percent. Speaker Jose de Venecia announced, "It's a sacrifice." Yes, yes, of someone else's taxes.

He has some unlikely allies. Having dipped into the barrel, party-list congressmen, like Teddy Casino and Crispin Beltran, praise their slabs. This is Pinoy socialism with a porcine snout. "Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your party list pork barrels."

Debts by government-owned or controlled corporations dwarf the pork barrel. But they're under-reported by a press focused on the political. "We are going bananas and here is the National Power Corp. out of control," Sen. Joker Arroyo noted.

At what level will the senators cut their pork? Senators Frankin Drilon, Panfilo Lacson, Alfredo Lim and Arroyo can point to their total renunciation of the slush fund.

"Some legislators ask in exchange for reducing their pork barrel there should be no additional taxes," Solita Monsod of UP notes. "It hasn't sunk into the minds of some of our decision makers...that this is not an either-or situation but a both-and one."

Monsod was referring to a package of inter-related measures, proposed by the UP Eleven. Designed to spread the burdens, the package, if implemented, could stave off collapse. They'd ease transition from our troubled past, through the booby-trapped present, to an uncertain future.

Monsod's frustration is shared by many. The UP paper is proposing structural reforms. Critics Walden Bello and others say they're "selective and not radical enough." But that's another story.

Many leaders still assume a quick fix will do. Business-as-usual can follow. Thus, their "sacrifices" goes, as Winston Churchill snorted, "in strange paradox: decided only to be undecided; resolved to be irresolute; adamant for drift, solid for fluidity and powerful for impotence."

But tomorrow will not be another today. We've run out of resources—and time. Congress took 32 working days to canvass and proclaim the elected President and Vice President. In that span of time, P23.8 billion was added to the national debt. Another 185,000 infants were born. Life will not wait.

A country of great needs first must overhaul mindsets. Reforms start only when obsolete mental frameworks are recast, Nobel economics laureate Joseph Stiglitz notes.

In times of crisis, the poor starve some more. The rich merely rearrange their menus. Thus, we search for models of limited wants.

"Produce your needs," Mohandas Ghandi said, "and reduce your wants." He lived what he preached—and broke chains that fettered his people.

"What sacrifices demanded will be evenly carried," Joseph Estrada perorated in his inaugural speech. "For every sacrifice you carry, I will carry twice the weight." His soused presidency lead to disgraceful ouster.

The current crisis demands credible leadership by example. "Leaders have to take the first hit." From the President down, all must slash their perks—and be seen doing it.

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines president Fernando Capalla asked priests to donate their allowances. The Silliman University High School Class of 1962 donated cash and jewelry. Don't hold your breath for Imelda to contribute a tiara or two. But can the Marcoses' real estate bill—larger than the pork barrel and finally settled by the Supreme Court—not be collected?

The rich must share more, if not out of altruism, then for insurance on their possessions. "He was surprised that when rich people were starving," Gabriel Garcia Marquez's fictional character Tomas says, "they looked so much like the poor."

* * *

(E-mail: juan_mercado@pacific.net.ph)

Essentials

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

JONATHAN Velasco, a Filipino conductor, has a good point. A perennial judge in international choral competitions, he has seen Filipino choral groups do immensely well abroad. Many of them have won prizes in prestigious competitions in Asia and Europe.

What he cannot understand, he says, is why government officials keep proposing to give huge cash rewards to Filipino athletes who will do the country proud. Such as they did only recently during the Olympics, GMA herself promising a million bucks to the Filipino athlete who will bring the country its first gold. When, Velasco said, Filipino musicians have been doing exactly that for a long time. They've been winning big in the Olympics of music. Music remains the country's forte, the one thing Filipinos naturally excel at and the one thing Filipinos have been reaping plaudits for the world over. Why not give them the money instead?

I did not remark when Velasco said at a press conference to announce Manila Philharmonic's offerings in the coming months that the reason government officials probably make that offer is that they know their money is safe. The probability a Filipino athlete will bring home the gold in these days of diminished expectations is practically nil. By contrast, Filipino musicians are more than likely to separate fools from their money, or officials from their pork.

But levity aside, I don't know that we shouldn't take Velasco's complaint seriously. That is particularly so in the light of one thing, which is that in these days not just of diminished expectations but horrendous ones (economists have been warning of an economic collapse unless we curb the budget deficit—music is likely to be one of the first casualties). It is not just that musicians are not bound to be rewarded as they should, it is that they are bound to be punished as they shouldn't. The normal instinct in times of economic trouble is to cut out what is not essential. And for some reason, in this country, music—and the arts generally—are first to qualify as non-essential.

I remember saying this, too, to Francisco Feliciano a few months ago when he held a press conference to drum up interest in his project, which is the national youth summer music camp. Last April and May, they held their sixth. The summer camp recruits musical prodigies and trains them intensively in various musical instruments. Feliciano had several kids play before us (trombone, trumpet, violin, cello), and it was easy to see why Filipinos routinely wow audiences wherever they go. This was shortly before the elections, and Feliciano was complaining about the dumbing of Filipino musicality, as seen—or heard—in the tasteless campaign jingles, which were rip-offs from popular noontime dance ditties. That was the disease, he said, the kids playing classical (local and foreign) music was the cure.

Like Rodel Colmenar, founder and music director of Manila Philharmonic, and indeed like the other people involved with serious musical effort in this country, Feliciano was banking on the private sector to support his effort. But he wasn't loath to get government help where he could get it, given that his initiative was likely to fall on many deaf ears, literally, in this age of MTV. It's not easy getting the public, the youth in particular, to appreciate San Pedro and Mozart, Buencamino and Bach, in the days of Incubus and Maroon 5, Matchbox 20 and Blink 182. So it wouldn't hurt to get government to lend a hand.

I said that might not be so easy. In these lean years in particular, government wasn't likely to look kindly upon the arts. A GMA government above all which even then looked headed for a second term: Culture, or plain civilization, was not its strongest suit. With GMA's wanton electoral spending moreover, it didn't look likely the economy would improve. It looked likely runaway inflation and currency devaluation would soon hit the nation.

At the time, an impending economic collapse was only being whispered in corners. It is now being shouted openly. So, are we likely to see musicians encouraged by public-sector support for their Olympian achievements or will they be the first to be sacrificed by the current calls for austerity?

I myself, from a completely pragmatic viewpoint, can't understand why music—and the arts—should be the first to go in dire economic times. At the very least, as Velasco and Feliciano point out, music is the country's comparative advantage, the one thing that is giving the country not just a flood of medals but a flood of dollars. The country's biggest export is not fruits, it is people, musicians at the head of them. Other countries, not least Southeast Asian ones, give substantial subsidies to their arts, why shouldn't we? You do not allow your competitive edge to dull, you hone it. Certainly, you do not kill the goose that lays golden eggs.

Quite apart from that, music—and the arts—promote a lifestyle that is acquisitive only in spirit, not in body. People who are literate and appreciate aesthetics are not naturally given to keeping mistresses, buying cars and shopping till they drop, though some of them have been known to make love till they do. We want to encourage people to live simpler lifestyles, or more austere ones, we should encourage learning, reading and listening. They cost very little, certainly far less than cell phones and Pajeros. If Mike Arroyo and company were to improve their minds, they would immediately improve the budget—by wanting less of it. If only from this perspective, dire times should make the arts the priority, not the sacrificial lamb.

The things of the body we can do much without. The things of the soul, ah, there we can never really have enough.

Stiff penalties for drunken driving in Japan

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

TOKYO—Over dinner we recounted to our daughter Christine and her husband Keiichi a recent early morning vehicular smash-up in a Pasig flyover. The accident involved a car carrying former Manila representative and Malacañang official Nestor Ponce and his wife on their way to a prayer meeting to Tagaytay and another vehicle driven by a young *balikbayan* coming from a bar in Eastwood in Pasig. Ponce was killed instantly and his wife was badly injured. There was some speculation in the media that the young man might have had a drink too many.

Our daughter noted the harshness of Japanese laws on drunken driving, and how, by contrast, RP laws are so lax about the matter. Her husband stressed that Japanese laws have, over the past few years, gotten tougher. For instance, if a person is caught driving after drinking, not only would he be slapped with stiff penalties and imprisonment; his companions in the vehicle would also be penalized. The operating principle here is group responsibility and peer pressure. It is presumed that in a group, the members agree beforehand who'll do the driving and he'd be pressured not to drink. Even the host of the party would also get into trouble in case a guest is arrested for drunken driving. The idea is that the host should prevail on guests, who are to drive later, to refrain from drinking.

* * *

I asked how those who cannot avoid drinking get home as the subways run only up to a certain hour of the night. They take a cab home, or check into a hotel, or hire a driver to take them home. However, Keiichi explained, the last option is expensive as there has to be a second car to take the driver home. If one pleads that he has no funds to pay the fines, the police authorities are empowered by law to scrutinize his bank account to determine the veracity of his plea.

These measures have been adopted because of the rise in the number of accidents involving drunken driving. We could certainly learn from the Japanese a lesson on how to minimize the menace of drunken driving in our midst.

* * *

I had written earlier that Japanese firms played a crucial role in Japan's strong showing at the Athens Olympics, by sponsoring athletes' training and other expenses. But the expenses have been more than worth their weight in gold, for the advertising mileage has been tremendous. For instance, for the 42.2 km women's marathon, the petite gold medalist Mizuki Noguchi, wore sunglasses, designed (specially for the purpose), by Yamamoto Kagaku, and running shoes, by the Kobe-based Asics Corp. News reports said that after receiving numerous inquiries about the sunglasses, Yamamoto will now go into commercial production of the sunglasses. After crossing the finish line, the runner took off one of her shoes and gave it a kiss. That scene was aired repeatedly on TV, thus giving viewers the impression that the shoes gave her the technological edge. Asics officials are not protesting as it sets to raise its sales to 4.7 billion yen from last year's 800 million yen. Some 160 fitness clubs across Japan also hope to cash in on the over 885.7 billion yen business in sports goods and activities expected to be generated by the fervor for the country's Olympic team.

* * *

Our visit here has enabled us to catch up on several happy events. Christine, who paints in oils and water colors in her and Keiichi's mountain hideaway on the lush foothills of Mt. Fuji, with its five spectacular lakes, had a successful exhibition of her works in Tokyo late last year. They bear a Gauguinesque influence—strong vivid colors and flat Asian faces that look at the world with big dark eyes, or familiar scenes from the Philippines where she grew up. Also late last year, Christine launched in Tokyo her first book, a novel of "pure fiction" in English called "Tokyo Stories." This book, which her co-publisher at Oshino Books, Jim Merk, terms "painfully delightful," provides entertaining glimpses into the "life, love and laughter" of the large expatriate community in the "anything goes" Japanese capital as she sees it from myriad angles. A reviewer of the "Daily Yomiuri," Japan's biggest English-language newspaper, Colin Donald, called "Tokyo Stories"—which is set amid some of the best-known modern landmarks here, including Roppongi Hills and the swank Park Hyatt Hotel—"one of the best depictions available of a particular kind of cosmopolitan social life in Tokyo in a particular era."

* * *

Her book is being translated right now into Japanese for the local market, but I must say that I'm rather proud of Christine's mastery of the English language, which, by the way, didn't come by accident. Her old lady, whom she has beaten to publishing a book, had been blue-pencilling her work since her elementary years in Maryknoll College. This book displays her writing skills, but I can barely wait for her second novel, which she is working on now, which I hope will go deeper into the heart of where people live—their feelings and emotions, angst, hurts and glories.

Christine—who used to work as a correspondent here for the INQUIRER and in the Philippine Embassy as public information officer during the Ramos years—also wants to do an illustrated guide to some of the loveliest and most interesting places to stay in historical cities, rustic villages and hot-springs towns in the Japanese countryside. But in the future of her dreams, she wants to run an art school for children and, much later, put up a Bed & Breakfast outside a village in the hills of Umbria in Italy. For the book, visit Christine's website: www.tokyostories.net.

Asian idols, Asian stars

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

STAR-STRUCK, star-studded, star search, star quality, star factor, star complex, star potential, star in a million, stardom. It's all about stars. The young are bombarded with star images, dazzled by star dust, enticed with the possibility of becoming instant stars themselves.

TV shows like "American Idol" surely spawned a lot of "idol" contests all over the world. The local electronic media networks are trying to outdo one another in flaunting their latest finds, showing the mesmerized world how good they are in their business of entertaining you and me.

But what's a star?

If we go by the pop searches and contests on TV here and abroad in the recent past, the stars are those who have captivated their audience and, of course, the "star" judges, with their vocal talent, originality in projecting themselves, persistence, never-say-die attitude, physical stamina and beauty, the quality of their delivery. One could go on and on.

It's a battle of nerves, too, and those who endure and survive to the finals, even if they don't make it to the top three, are stars, too. You have to give it to them.

It all looks so open, too. The audience is sometimes even privy to the physical make-overs. People listen in to the judging, the cutting remarks, the grudging compliments of the judges. They are witness to how these star wannabes go through the wringer. Why, the TV viewers even participate in the star-making through the use of their thumbs, by texting, that is.

Then, suddenly, a new star, a new idol, is born. The star-making machine continues to churn out more. Some of these finds stay long in the limelight, others fade away too soon. Not a few become victims of their own celebrity status.

I don't know how long this star craze will be foisted on the young and the old, how long it will sell to advertisers, when the audience will become weary of it and when it will be replaced by something totally different.

But surely the high-rating entertainment Olympics which saw the young go through vocal paroxysms and make facial contortions in order to impress the audience with their lung power has raked in oodles for both the networks and the contestants and their coterie.

And one has to credit these young people who continue to enter the race and push themselves to the limit. One can only hope that their experience broadens their world view and their grasp of their surroundings. They should not get fixated in a star mold or in outer space. Otherwise, Houston, we have a problem.

There is a problem when the words "star" and "idol" become interchangeable as the entertainment Olympics seem to have projected. For by idol, we mean someone worth looking up to and emulating.

Stardom, as we know it, comes about because of a person's great talent, beauty, intelligence, physical strength and agility as in the case of those in sports. Add charisma and you have a blazing star. Media packaging and projection do wonders, too.

Persons gifted with the above become idolized. One can't discount the possibility that some will graduate from being idolized stars to being true idols/models, indeed.

But there are persons whose greatness comes not just from the wealth of gifts they were born with and have honed to near perfection and exhibited under the glare of publicity. They shine because of the greatness of their spirit, the greatness of their giving. They shine through, not because of borrowed light, but because of their deeds for others. These are true idols, indeed. And these idols need not be stars.

Searching for idols for the young? The book "Great Men and Women of Asia, Volume 1" was launched last Monday by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation and Anvil Publishing. Between covers are 15 stories about RM awardees in the early years of the RMAF which began its work in 1958. More stories will be written, I promise you. We owe that to the young.

Here are the first 15. The titles tell you something about greatness.

Mother Teresa: Wanting the Unwanted, Loving the Unloved; Akira Kurosawa: the Filmmaker as Humanist; Sir Henry Tristram Holland & Ronald Holland: Healers in a Forgotten Land; Y.C. James Yen: Dreamer, Doer, Citizen of the World; Augustine Nguyen Lac Hoa: Lifesaver, Refugee, Soldier, Priest;

Tee Tee Luce: Savior of Street Waifs; Mochtar Lubis: Freedom Fighter, Truth Teller; Verghese Kurien: Milkman to India's Millions; Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussein: Leadership without Fanfare; Satyajit Ray: Poet of Great Cinema;

Tarzie Vittachi: Warrior of the Printed Word; Helen Kim: Freeing Women's Minds and Hearts; Akhter Hameed Khan: One with the Poor; Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie: A Lifetime of Philanthropy; The Dalai Lama: The Simple Monk from Tibet.

The writers: Pennie de la Cruz, Ester Dipasupil, Angelina Goloy, Ma. Socorro Naguit and myself. Lorna K. Tirol edited and Yasmin Ong illustrated with pen and ink.

The book is cheap at P280. It will be launched again, sometime soon, at Powerbooks. Call Anvil (6373621) or RMAF (5213166 to 68) if you can't wait.

* * *

If you have telephone directories piling up in your house, why not donate them to the livelihood program of the Alay Kapwa Christian Community? These will be transformed into beautiful ladies' bags and gift baskets and earn income for the poor who make them. You will find some of these products at the Alay Kapwa stall in Rockwell.

Please, if you are able, drop your old phone books at the residence of Maring Feria, 3 Taurus, Bel Air, Makati, Tel. No. 8956234. Or, if you have gathered many, they could be picked up. Thank you, thank you.

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Obscurantism

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THE PHILIPPINES, its government, its laws, its principles and many of its modern policies are the legacy of the campaign that led to independence in 1946. The Philippine state as it is (and the people that we are) owes its institutions and characteristics to the peaceful independence efforts under the Americans. We may owe the spirit of freedom to the efforts of the revolutionaries, but the substance of freedom is the achievement of another generation, which deserves credit for its achievements.

The problem, of course, is that speeches are less satisfying than battles, even if you happen to lose all the battles and win political victories by making speeches. Nonetheless it needs to be pointed out that you cannot replace a dogmatic view with an equally dogmatic interpretation of events, because the latter will end up just as unsatisfactory as the former. And this is what has happened.

Our state and its institutions have covered themselves in the trappings of the idealized First Republic. Never mind the silly contradictions that ensue. We have a military with insignia derived from Aguinaldo's army, dressed in 1950s-style American uniforms, which really underlines the fact that our military and its traditions are utterly American in origin and owe nothing to the Malolos Republic. The ceremonial guard in Malacañang wears the uniform of the Guardia Civil, and while other ceremonial units wear something supposed to be rayadillo , they are shod in World War II-style combat boots. And yet while the Army claims to have been established under Aguinaldo, nearly all government offices have to date their genesis to the American era, proving that the civilian power from which everything emanates (including military authority) has a short pedigree indeed—making one suspect that military contempt for civilians has an element of snobbery, since they can claim an earlier foundation however fictitious the assertion may be.

Our first Supreme Court chief justice, Cayetano Arellano, was installed under the Americans. The legislative Houses can only look back to the First Philippine Assembly of 1907 and parliamentary procedure is ultimately derived from the Jones Law-era legislature. The presidency itself claims ancestry from Aguinaldo, but throughout the presidency as an institution is permeated with the spirit, traditions, and can only use for precedence in legal affairs the example of Filipino officials installed during the Commonwealth, who used, for their purposes, the examples of American governors-general (and even presidents). Even the title of "Excellency" owes its existence to the fact that this was the honorific for governors-general. The only thing the presidency owes to Aguinaldo is the triangle in the presidential seal.

So we have a government claiming a pedigree it isn't entitled to, and no wonder schizophrenia which has plagued us since President Diosdado Macapagal declared that the Revolution remained unfinished. Aside from his pronouncement being an unsuccessful attempt to steal the fire from the Left (which always maintained that the Revolution was finished, thanks to those who had helped set up the Third Republic born in 1946, but which nonetheless hoped to win a refought revolution), it was also a declaration of illegitimacy. Presidents from Roxas to Garcia dated the independence of the Philippines from July 4, 1946. Thus 1953, for example, was "Of the Independence of the Philippines, the seventh." After Macapagal, the phrase was discreetly dropped, because how can you reconcile an official birthday in 1898 with the real birthday in 1946? How tiresome it would be to keep distinguishing the country's official (and yes, only true) birthday, June 12, from its legal date of birth, July 4!

Macapagal's declaration and subsequent attempts to focus things on the Revolution while disregarding everything that took place after the Revolution and the Republic were crushed, ignored the experience and contributions of a whole generation. We have amnesia inflicted upon amnesia, and you wonder why we all suffer from an identity crisis?

There is only one word to adequately describe both attempts to fit the square peg of our national experience into the round hole of a well-ordered, ideologically motivated scheme of things: Obscurantism.

Our old revolutionaries who rebelled against the original obscurantism of the friars are all gone, of course. In their place is the generation which the old revolutionaries hectored as being ignorant of the lesson of the Revolution, who, among other things had rejected Masonry and all its works and replaced it with a disgusting affection for the Americans who fostered a new obscurantism called colonial mentality. Of course, the younger generation thought they proved their elders wrong during World War II. Which gave them the moral authority to hector yet another generation. Which, this time, did not take their elders' lectures sitting down, but instead endeavored, at the barricades and in the hills, to replace their parents' colonial mentality with the obscurantism of dogmatic Marxism.

A mature country with mature leaders could give credit where credit is due, and weave the complexity of our political history into an amazing and, yes, inspiring tapestry. Yet what Macapagal began, Marcos continued and attempted to finish: to steal the thunder from the Left by adopting some basic tenets of its lies. The result has been as predictable as it is shameful: a government aspiring to build upon myths, some of which were inspired by the very people aspiring to bring the government down.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Evolution

YOUNG BLOOD

Xyza Faye Foronda

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

IN BIOLOGY class, I learned that everything in this world evolves. And when I say everything, I mean everything. It's quite interesting that I had to learn life's greatest lessons in such a scientific fashion. It's ironic how I can relate Biology to life, or whatever it is, for that matter. And funny that my heart had to evolve in Biology class.

I cannot remember exactly how it happened or even how it started. I guess those things don't matter that much to me anymore. All I know is that one day, I woke up with the weirdest feeling along with the realization that something had transpired in the middle of a discussion in our Biology class.

He, as I would like to put it, belonged to a different species, and existed in a separate ecosystem, far from the place that I inhabited. He was more like a hybrid, a product of the interbreeding of two different species. And he was just so different, although he always had a way of standing out from all the rest.

Despite his unique individuality, I was very well acquainted with his kind. And I thought all the while that he would remain just that—a mere acquaintance—since geographical isolation seemed like a great hindrance to establishing some close interaction with him.

But evolution gradually came into the picture and changed everything after contact was established. A friendship tinged with malice eventually developed and flourished. Several meetings, a few submitted reports and, of course, a good number of intelligent conversations then started to complicate everything and change my point of view.

A symbiotic relationship was established. And what was at first parasitism turned to commensalism, and later mutualism. Through this relationship and our frequent close contact, we seemed to have found our niche in an ecosystem which together we had built and developed.

And evolution took place. What once seemed like a natural aversion toward him and his kind evolved into fondness for him. Somewhere along the line, something had made me change my mind and I began to harbor such an emotion for an individual like him. There was after all a million and one reasons I could cite to convince myself that such foolishness should end, and I could only come up with one, miserable reason to temporarily lose my sanity. It may not make sense, but maybe evolution ignited infatuation and made it bloom at a certain place and time after I had given up hope that I could still take a leap of faith and plunge into an absurdity such as this.

Thus, out of billions of people existing in this biosphere, it had to happen to me. It's truly insane and simply illogical. Strange, how I could lose logic in such a scientific way.

But just as certain species become extinct at particular periods in the geological time scale, the interaction ceased to be what it was. But still its remnants, much like fossils, do remain. What's left are just the memories—nothing else.

The semester has ended and I have finally bidden farewell to my Biology book and to the tedious task of accomplishing laboratory reports. We have gone back to our separate ecosystems, and geographic isolation once again serves as a barrier to maintaining the symbiotic relationship we established in the ecosystem that we developed in our Biology class.

Sometimes, it makes me sad to think that everything has come to a close. I guess impressions also evolve. In a way, I have learned to love the subject which I had once abhorred and despised so much.

Indeed, life is a survival of the fittest. The world is but the product of a series of continuous evolutionary changes which help enhance the perpetuation of the human race. And living things evolve in order to live and survive. All this I learned in Biology class.

But more than anything else, I have learned to value and cherish the beauty of Darwin's theory of evolution. In Biology class, I learned that evolution transpires and when it does, it exempts no one. Not even hearts that seem to have hardened and turned cold and remorseful through time.

Amazingly, my heart started beating again, after a long time of what seemed like emotional stagnation and deprivation. Because of this, my life has never been the same again. And I have him to be grateful for—with some help from Biology, of course. Although I know that this looks like a one-sided love affair, since I am not sure if he too experienced the evolution of his heart, I am nevertheless thankful that it happened. Evolution is after all a continuous process, a never-ending cycle. Things do change as time passes.

I can only look back to this memory in the future and smile to myself as I recall how the process of evolution wonderfully breathed new hope into my life and infused it with a new spirit.

Xyza Faye Foronda, 18, is a 3rd year BS Psychology student at Xavier University Ateneo de Cagayan.

THEY SAID

Vision

"Remedying this crisis cannot be simply achieved by naming a national intelligence director. What is necessary is vision and an unswerving commitment to serving the nation beyond the political and policy interests of any one particular administration."

—Former United States arms inspector David Kay, giving a bleak assessment of the state of US intelligence

Debt trapdoor

"The increasing share of debt service in the budget is the natural result of having to borrow for our needs because of our penchant to outrun and outwit tax collectors."

—Rep. Rolando Andaya

First step

"We should first recognize that we are in a crisis and then move toward the solution."

—Makati Business Club executive director Guillermo Luz

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Also consider pedestrian convenience and safety

THIS is an observation to some of the measures on traffic management currently being undertaken by the Metro Manila Development Authority. Specifically, MMDA seems to give preference to the motoring public, facilitating the movement of motor vehicles without so much regard, if at all, to pedestrian access and safety. May we cite the following to support this observation:

1. So many intersections especially in Quezon City are closed to pedestrian traffic to facilitate non-stop movement of through-traffic. Vehicles are no longer allowed to cross and execute U-turns and left turns in intersections, thereby rendering the still unpaid traffic signal lights installed at these places useless. In lieu thereof, U-turn slots have been opened at certain mid-points of the center islands, far beyond the intersections. In this regard, it is unthinkable why the Department of Public Works and Highways, which has jurisdiction over all national highways in the country, allows MMDA to manipulate our road system.

2. The pedestrian barrier along the center island under the Magallanes interchange in Makati City has been removed, thus allowing pedestrians to cross this busy, wide thoroughfare. Why not put back the pedestrian barriers to force pedestrians to use the pedestrian overpass in the area? There are complaints, though, that the said overpass, which is unlighted, is haven to holduppers and snatchers at nighttime.

3. The whole stretch of the Edsa extension in Pasay City from Taft Avenue to Roxas Boulevard has no pedestrian crossing lanes. It's a lot of inconvenience for commuters alighting from the nearby LRT station to get a jeepney or bus ride on the other side of Edsa. On the other hand, motorists from Taft Avenue going south have now to travel up to the end of Edsa at Roxas Boulevard where a U-turn slot is located because they can no longer make a left or U-turn at the intersection.

—TRANQUILINO S. ATIENZA,
tranquilino_atienza@yahoo.com

Don't ignore Fact-Finding Board's records

MUCH is being reported in our media about the "new disclosures" on the murder of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino. I would like to call the attention of whoever feels it is his/her duty to look into this "new evidence," to review the records of the Fact-Finding Board and the Sandiganbayan before hastily accepting as gospel what "witnesses," and especially M/Sgt. Pablo Martinez, are now saying. Several points to look into:

1. Why are these "witnesses" only surfacing now? They could have testified before the Fact-Finding Board and/or the Sandiganbayan and possibly saved the prisoners from the long prison term that they have had to undergo.

2. Martinez testified under oath before the Fact-Finding Board and never mentioned the participation of Eduardo Cojuangco, Gen. Romeo Gatan and others whom he now is implicating.

3. It is difficult to accept that a sergeant was the only one who knew about the plan to assassinate Ninoy. What was so special about the position of Martinez that makes him the special person to carry out an assassination without the knowledge of his superiors like Gen. Fabian Ver, Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio and Maj. Gen. Prospero Olivas, not to say of the others in the chain of command?

4. The records of the case are with the Sandiganbayan and my set of microfilm supplied by Dante Santos has been turned over to the UP Law Library. Look at the evidence and particularly the photo sequence prepared by the Board panel and presented as evidence. These pictures prove, to my mind, conclusively that the story of Martinez is not true insofar as the assassination is concerned.

5. Whatever be the true assassination story, the military conspiracy theory is still a valid conclusion. Who ordered the conspiracy? The evidence only goes as far as Ver—why did he authorize the conspiracy? There is no evidence of record, if what Martinez says is true, about the mastermind. This is where he has failed the Filipino people and is paying for it with his imprisonment.

—BIENVENIDO A. TAN JR.,
Unit 7A, The Valero Tower, Valero St.,
Salcedo Vill., Makati City

Unfavorable SC decision on water districts

WITH the looming power rate hikes, additional taxes and series of price hikes besieging us, I can only wish—as a consumer—that water, a vital necessity, will remain at its current price or, better yet, be made more affordable.

It is my hope that the Supreme Court, after fending off abusive electricity rate increases in the past to the advantage of consumers, will continue to uphold the constitutional right of every Filipino to have access to such basic need as affordable drinking water.

In this light, I hope that the SC would reconsider its decision declaring all local water districts as government-owned or controlled corporations—a decision which I, as a consumer, believe is detrimental to the fate of our local water district here in Leyte, as well as of the other water districts in the country.

—ORLY TAGUBAN,
Sogod, Southern Leyte

Tullahan-Ugong Bridge derated but still in use

IN REACTION to the news item "Endangered bridge" (PDI, 7/27/04), may we clarify that contrary to the report that it has not been in use since 1965, Tullahan-Ugong Bridge has been serving its purpose up to this time. However, because of its precarious and unstable condition, its load capacity has been derated to five tons and only vehicles weighing five tons or below are allowed to pass the bridge.

Due to wear and tear, the bridge sustained extensive and major damages as shown by the cracking on the slab, progressive gaps in between spans, displaced concrete railings and sidewalks, as well as exposed tendons of the T-Beams. The Valenzuela City government and the regional director of the PNP Northern Police District Office have been informed of the critical status of the bridge. We have sought the assistance of both offices in regulating traffic on the bridge by prohibiting heavy equipment and vehicles from using it.

We have recommended the total reconstruction of Tullahan-Ugong Bridge at an estimated cost of P25 million. Appropriate coordination with the Valenzuela City government, the MMDA and all other agencies concerned will be made once the funds are released and before the workplans for the reconstruction are prepared and finalized.

With regard to the status of the Tullahan Bridge along MacArthur Highway in Valenzuela City and Malabon City, the load capacity was reduced from 20 tons to 10 tons due to the serious damage on its concrete deck and girder.

—BERNARDO P. MORENO,
officer in charge-district engineer,
Department of Public Works and
Highways-NCR, Third Manila,
Engineering District,
Gov. Pascual Avenue,
Malabon, Metro Manila

Pin down the guilty in government anomalies

I THINK that Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is in the right direction—much of what she had exposed point to a lot of illegal government deals during the Ramos administration, the negative aftereffects of which we are feeling to this day. To name a few: the Centennial Expo at the Clark Air Base, which turned out to be a white elephant; the PEA-Amari deal; the IPP contracts; the deregulation of the oil industry, and the sale of Petron. The present administration should seriously investigate these matters, and those found guilty should be prosecuted with the full force of the law.

I remember there was a committee created by the Arroyo administration to look into the IPP contracts. Where are the findings of the committee? The committee apparently has died a natural death, the findings seem to be nowhere, and nobody has been held liable.

—DING TELERON,
isidroteleron@hotmail.com

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Hatid sa inyo ng ating kabalitaan ngayong linggo,
Inquirer Metro Editor Cenon Bibe

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Question of the Week

With over 70 provincial journalists killed in the Philippines since 1986, what do you think should be done to finally end the killings?

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Donation good but paying taxes better—Gokongwei son

By Clarissa S. Batino

IN A manner of speaking, it's good idea.

That was how Lance Gokongwei, president of JG Summit Corp., reacted yesterday to calls for rich Filipinos to donate possibly up to one million pesos to a proposed P5-billion fund to help the cash-strapped government.

But more than the symbolic gesture of donating cash, Gokongwei said big businesses could do more by paying their taxes correctly.

"We already pay several kinds of taxes, like VAT, excise, income taxes. Our basic responsibility is to pay our taxes," said the only son of tycoon John Gokongwei, one of the richest Chinese-Filipino businessmen in the country.

JG Summit Corp. is the Gokongwei flagship company that is engaged in manufacturing of food and beverages, telecom services, real estate, retail and wholesale, and airline operations, among others.

While at first hesitant to reply to queries on whether he was willing to fork out P1 million for the government, Gokongwei eventually conceded it was a good idea.

"This is like what they did in South Korea, where money and jewelry were pooled as donation to the government after the Asian crisis. Symbolically, this call is a good idea," said Gokongwei.

Speaker Jose de Venecia has announced a donation of one million pesos to the proposed fund and appealed to wealthy Filipinos to match the gesture by donating cash and jewelry.

"The important thing to do is for the government to improve its tax collection," Gokongwei said. "It is a good sign that lawmakers are already giving up a substantial amount of their pork."

The young Gokongwei said his family continued to have strong faith that the country's economy would continue to recover.

"I would not make any investment in this country if I do not believe in this government. We have good leadership. It's just that there's a lot of issues that have accumulated overtime," Gokongwei added.

BIR misses August collection target by 31%

From page A1

reach only P29.7 billion or P13.3 billion short of the BIR's goal.

Revolutionary conditions

"Given that revenue targets have already been adjusted to more reasonable levels since the start of this year, such magnitude of shortfall occurs only during revolutionary conditions," Salceda said in a statement.

He said the expected shortfall in August would aggravate the fiscal standing of the government.

"This would bring the 2004 shortfall to P18 billion for the first eight months, which is not encouraging for the full year deficit target of P197 billion unless the government scrapes further an already skeletal spending for 2004," Salceda said.

Because of dwindling revenue collections, the government will have limited options on how to manage its finances, he said.

"Borrow more or spend less" was how Salceda summed up the options.

On the nontax revenue side, the government had "virtually collected its full-year share of dividends from government-owned and controlled corporations way in advance in the first half of the year," he said.

"So we expect little or nothing on the horizon by way of incremental revenues that could provide any relief to a cash-strapped national government in the second half (of the year)," Salceda said.

He noted that from January to July 2004, the BIR collected a total of P268.08 billion, which is short of its goal of P272.77 billion.

The administration has asked Congress to pass a set of tax measures aimed at raising P80 billion, but a number of legislators have opposed the measures, claiming that the government needs only to improve its tax collection based on existing tax laws.

Transaction value

Lapus explained that the losses from under-declaration at the Bureau of Customs stemmed from the adoption since year 2000 of the system of levying duties on the "transaction value" agreed upon by the exporter and importer.

Before this system was adopted, the country had pre-shipment inspection done, for a fee, by the foreign firm Societe Generale Surveillance (SGS). The inspection serves as basis for customs duties.

"The exporter and importer can agree to lower the transaction value of a shipment," Lapus said.

The SGS has terminated its services over unpaid fees.

Lapus noted that the government was also losing from technical and outright smuggling.

He cited the importation of unleaded gasoline, which is passed off as diesel to evade payment of higher duties.

26 black holes

In a separate interview, BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno said that a considerable amount of taxes was not collected because of exemptions in the Value-Added Tax system.

Twenty-six sectors, including payments from doctors and lawyers, are exempted from VAT, according to Parayno.

"You have 26 black holes and the amount of taxes is significant," Parayno said but he did not give the actual amount of revenues lost.

Congress also played a part in the losses of the government.

Parayno said the government lost revenues because Congress failed to index taxes on "sin products" like tobacco and liquor.

Congress is considering the reactivation of the Legislative Executive Tax Commission that will not only identify needed tax and administrative measures but also set revenue targets, according to Lapus.

The commission existed during the pre-martial law years but was deemed abolished after then strongman Ferdinand Marcos padlocked Congress when he imposed martial law in 1972.

Solons agree to give 1 month pay: 'We're not greedy'

From page A1

salaries, amounting to P35,000 each.

"What is important here is to let the people know that we, in Congress, are not greedy, that members of Congress are willing to give up their one month basic pay to help alleviate the fiscal crisis," Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri said.

He added: "It might be minuscule but it is one step in the right direction."

Sen. Manuel Roxas sounded a bit more gallant.

The former trade secretary said in Kidapawan City yesterday that giving up his own pork barrel amounting to P200 million a year was "not a problem at all" if he was assured the money would be used to develop the countryside.

Roxas is the fifth member of the Senate to declare his readiness to give up his entire share of the so-called Priority Development Assistance Fund (PDAF) to help the government ride out a fiscal crisis.

More popularly called pork barrel, the funds intended for local development have been a source of kickbacks and campaign money for lawmakers and local officials.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales last week called on members of Congress to surrender their pork barrel as an act of "fasting" against corruption. He said giving it up could be the country's "last chance" to recover from its fiscal woes.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson has also urged his colleagues to renounce their pork.

More donors coming

Each of the country's 23 senators gets P200 million a year in pork barrel. Members of the House of Representatives each get 65 million a year.

Zubiri, of Lakas, said more congressmen were expected to sign a memorandum he was circulating agreeing to donate one month of their basic pay to the national coffers to help bail the government out of its fiscal mess.

Zubiri said the salaries would be added to a P1.45-million fund initially put up by Speaker Jose de Venecia and five other congressmen.

The donations will be turned over to the Department of Budget and Management after the House secretary general has remitted the congressmen's salaries to the national treasurer, he added.

Zubiri, who gave an extra P100,000 to the fund, said the donations could be used to help ease the government's budget deficit, which stood at P80.1 billion in the first half of this year.

'My humble contribution'

Zubiri said he was also spending his own money in his trip to China as part of the House contingent accompanying President Macapagal-Arroyo in her state visit.

"I will spend my own money for my food and accommodation," he said in a press statement before he left. "This is my humble contribution to lessen the budget deficit which our country is currently facing."

De Venecia, who gave P1 million to launch the fund, said he expected 5,000 rich families nationwide to donate cash and jewelry to help him meet his P5-billion target collection.

He said the fund would be turned over to the government and solely used for the construction of 20,000 classrooms and purchase of 20,000 computers for public school students.

But Rep. Imee Marcos (Kilusang Bagong Lipunan, Ilocos Norte) proposed that the fund be given to poor people and typhoon victims and that it be channeled through the media, and not to the government.

"We have to make sure that the money will go directly to the people and not let government touch it," she said.

No soul-searching for them

At least eight congressmen may not have to go through periods of anguished soul-searching over whether or not they need to donate their pork to the government.

The reason is that they may not even have pork, one of them, Rep. Ronaldo Puno (Kampi, Antipolo City), said.

This is because the eight lawmakers have not been factored into the 2004 national budget, which is actually the reenacted budget of 2003.

Three of these lawmakers are representatives of newly created legislative districts, namely, Puno, Roilo Golez (Kampi, Parañaque) and Eduardo Roquero (Lakas, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan).

The five others come from the ranks of newly elected party-list representatives.

The 2004 budget of P864 billion is similar to the 2003 appropriations, from where the 228 members of the old 12th Congress got their PDAF.

There are 236 members in the current 13th Congress.

Roxas' terms

"It looks like we won't get any. But that's all right with me," said Puno, who is also the head of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino bloc. "We'll have to make do with what comes."

"*Tiis na lang muna* (We'll just bear with it)," he added.

Said neophyte Rep. Florencio Noel (party-list Anwaray): "We will settle for what will be given us."

Senator Roxas said that, while he was willing to give up his pork barrel, he could not allow that the amount be used to pay the country's foreign debt.

Roxas said he would surrender his pork if it would "go to development of the countryside, particularly the micro-small-medium enterprises and the protection of the supply chain in the market."

Sen. Miram Defensor-Santiago asked the Senate finance committee to study the possibility of abolishing or reducing all pork barrel in the 2005 budget.

"Let's seize this opportunity and reexamine the question of pork barrel. If we want to reduce or to remove it, let it be across all three branches of government, not only the legislature," she said in a news conference.

'Added work'

She said she had filed a resolution urging this study as well as another study on procedures for overseeing all intelligence funds of the military and law enforcement agencies.

This is because intelligence officials are not required to make a documentary explanation of where their funds go, she said.

The senator said all three branches had their pork barrel funds.

"I don't like pork barrel," she said, adding that this gives her "added work" because she has to decide where she will allocate the funds and monitor whether they are being spent properly.

"Number two. Even if I am personally strictly honest with my pork barrel, I have no guarantee that people down the line are not going to steal the money that I should have stolen in the first place," she said.

Earlier this week, Lower House leaders approved in principle a 38-percent cut in their pork barrel allocation for next year.

Malacañang has yet to make a similar move to slash what lawmakers termed as President Macapagal-Arroyo's own pork barrel—her social and intelligence funds.

"We're not talking of a fixed formula or fixed figure. What we are saying is that the President, in principle, is willing to match the sacrifice that will be done by the legislature," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Jeffrey M. Tupas and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Activist priest urges gov't: Tax El Shaddai

From page A1

For a start, Capalla proposed, priests, bishops and nuns could donate two months worth of allowances. He went as far as asking students to chip in by foregoing "luxuries" like "shopping and snacks."

The plea resulted yesterday in an assortment of reactions ranging from support to dissent and conditional agreement in between.

Aside from El Shaddai and Couples for Christ, Reyes pointed to Loved Flock Foundation, and Bukas Loob sa Diyos.

"Definitely, these organizations have more money than ordinary parishes that rely on collections (during Mass)," he said. "And their books are not open to the bishops."

He recalled that an earlier suggestion by a CBCP member to audit El Shaddai was rejected by the other bishops.

The hard times were reflected in the dwindling daily collections in most small parishes, said Reyes, who currently oversees the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish in Project 4, Quezon City.

"We have had to tighten our belts," he said, unlike "rich parishes located within posh villages such as the Forbes Park or Green Meadows." These ones were in a better position to raise funds to help the government.

The Church had a "mandate to use its resources for the poor," to begin with, he pointed out, but it could still be a "a good ally in asking the generous rich to reach deeper into their pockets."

It was a role that the Church could effectively play, he said, since its motives were hardly ever questioned.

Reyes had another suggestion: The Philippines could take a cue from Germany, which had imposed a "church tax" on citizens since the end of World War II. He was referring to *kirche steur*, tax collected from Germans who joined a religion. Part of the collection went back to the religious establishments as additional allowance for their priests and other special needs, he explained.

Having said all that, Reyes' bottom line was: "In these times of survival, separation of Church and State no longer applies. We should all work together."

Critical yes

In Quezon province, another activist priest, Fr. Raul Enriquez, supported Capalla's cause, with conditions. He described the campaign in a phone interview as "a good start" and said the religious community should "really set the example."

Enriquez, parish priest of Agdangan town in the Bondoc Peninsula area and chair of the Kapatiran and Alyansang Alay para sa Sambayanan-Quezon, said it was about time some clergymen turned away from "a life surrounded with affluence, like air-conditioned cars and bedrooms, expensive wines and sumptuous food."

By now, he said, Capalla's plea should have reached priests "drowning in perks and privileges," courtesy of rich benefactors.

But if the clergy were to go back to "basic Spartan living," Enriquez maintained, the government should do just as much. "This crisis would not be upon us in the first place, he said, if our leaders performed their duties honestly and judiciously."

The collective sacrifice should involve government officials, starting from Malacañang down to the barangay level, Enriquez said.

Capalla's appeal seems to have generated positive response from outside the clergy, too. Enriquez's province mate, environmentalist lawyer Asis Perez, asked for a list of depository banks who would accept donations for the purpose.

"It's a worthy cause," Perez, director of Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Luzon, told the INQUIRER. "Every peso will go a long way."

No way

Even so, Quezon remains split over the issue.

Capalla's proposal was nothing more than a "palliative measure," said Noel Suministrado, pastor of the Protestant United Church of Christ in Lucena City.

"The fiscal crisis is structural," Suministrado pointed out. "This means what we need to do is conduct a total overhaul of systems, instead of passing the hat. Only when people see fundamental changes will they be inspired to pitch in."

Fr. Pete Montallana, coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples Apostolate in the Prelature of Infanta and director of the Tribal Development Center, was even more skeptic.

"Why should I help a government that I do not trust?" he bristled. "If the root causes of the crisis are not addressed first, we will just be taken for a ride."

The militant group Pamalakaya couldn't agree more.

"Should people give hard-earned money to a corrupt and immoral administration?" spokesperson Gerry Albert Corpuz demanded. He denounced the campaign as "highly insulting to our intelligence," and said Capalla and the CBCP were acting like President Macapagal-Arroyo's "apologists."

Unsolicited help

Without prompting from the Church, alumni of Dumaguete City's Silliman University embarked on several fund-raising activities during their class reunions on Saturday, the institution's 103rd foundation anniversary.

SU High School Class 1962 passed a bag into which partying members dropped their jewelry, with which they hoped to "help defray the country's deficit." Other batches followed suit.

Inspired by this, two retired generals who once rebelled against the government came out to support the drive.

On Tuesday, retired Maj. Gen. Raymundo Jarque, security consultant of Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp., called up Hector "Tata" Villanueva, Batch '62 president, to offer his own gold ring. He said the ring was a gift from a Tausug friend in the late 1970s.

Jarque defected to the National Democratic Front in October 1995 in protest over the persecution by senior officers. He resurfaced as military consultant for the NDF panel in the March 1996 peace talks.

Retired Brig. Gen. Edgardo Abenina, who led coup attempts against the Aquino administration in 1987 and 1989, lauded the SU alumni's efforts.

"I am a poor man, and I cannot give you anything but advice," Abenina told Villanueva. "Make sure no politician rides on it."

The jewelry collected on Saturday will be auctioned this month by the Silliman Alumni Association Inc., after the pieces are appraised. *With a report from Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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Gloria asked to spare LGUs from IRA cut; unrest grows

BACOLOD CITY—The Iloilo provincial board has passed a resolution urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to desist from cutting or suspending the IRA share of local government units (LGUs).

The 13-member body unanimously passed the resolution during its regular session on Tuesday.

It was sponsored by board member Lilia Gonzales, president of the Iloilo chapter of the Provincial Councilors' League (PCL).

In its resolution, the board said the IRA is the "lifeblood of resources of local governments" and is important in the delivery of basic and vital social services.

The IRA is the tax share of LGUs, which get 40 centavos of every peso in taxes collected by the government.

The resolution said cutting or suspending the share of LGUs violate constitutional provisions that gave autonomy to LGUs.

Malacañang earlier announced plans to reduce the IRA of LGUs by P35 billion to avert a financial crisis but it later said it wants to freeze it to the current level after encountering resistance from local executives.

The provincial board said the biggest factor causing the fiscal crisis was heavy debt payment that constitutes 71 percent in the proposed 2005 budget submitted by Malacañang.

It urged the President to review the country's policy on debt servicing.

Despite expressing its opposition to the plan, LGUs have implemented belt-tightening measures.

In Marawi City, a Muslim academician asked the national government to spare the allocation for the Muslim Mindanao region from cuts.

Dr. Macabangkit Ati, vice chancellor of the Mindanao State University Marawi Campus, told the INQUIRER that a cut in resources intended for Muslim Mindanao means curtailing the already low levels of social services delivered to the people.

"This is worrisome given that the region is still fraught with prevalent lack of these services, and now the sustained flow of resources is threatened," he said.

Ati, a public administration academic, said the enormity of the development challenge still facing the region justifies the argument against a cutback.

Sparing Muslim Mindanao from the budget cuts, he said, would be an expression of the government's desire for peace in the region.

Ati said the task of providing education has a "potent role in peace building."

"Its effect takes time but only a true, proper and relevant education can provide the region's youth with equal opportunity for socio-economic advancement like others in the country," Ati said.

In Metro Manila, Muntinlupa City Mayor Jaime Fresnedi said should the IRA cut proceed, it should be based on LGUs' dependence on them.

Fresnedi reiterated the Metro Manila mayors' unanimous opposition to plans to slash the IRA.

"The cuts, if they could not be avoided, should be rationalized. It would not be fair if the IRA cut would be the same for all local units. Some cities and municipalities are more dependent on IRA than others," he said.

The mayor cited Muntinlupa's experience wherein the city government gets P300 million in annual IRA. *Carla Gomez and Nestor Burgos, PDI Visayas Bureau; Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau and Jerome Aning in Manila*

Ma, 5 kids classmates in school

TABACO CITY—The family that studies together learns together.

Perhaps, this was what Elominada Velasco, 35, had in mind when she agreed to attend a class where five of her eight children are her classmates at the San Lorenzo Elementary School's compound here.

Elominada and her children—Ely, 13, Edmond, 12, Arceli, 9, Raymart, 8 and Andrea, 7—are classmates under the Department of Education's Basic Literacy Program (BLP) being implemented by the Tabaco Division under its Non-Formal Education (NFE) Program. The program started in February this year.

The six Velasco family members are among the nine pioneering students who attend the special class from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"Elominada and her children are religious in attending their classes," said Ireen Asancha, NFE mobile teacher.

Asancha, however, said a member or two of the Velasco children are sometimes absent because they have to take care of their younger siblings or work as peddlers at the city's downtown.

"There have been times that they would also bring the three other children to the classroom because nobody in the family could take care of them," she said.

Asancha added that during the first few months of the sessions, the Velascos were always all present and striving to know how to count, read and write.

Now, after seven months, Elominada and her children already know how to count and write their names and are starting to read the letters of the alphabet, the teacher said.

"Edmond can read the alphabet faster than his mother," she said.

Elominada said that despite hardships in life, she wanted very much to know how to read, write and count, even though it was already too late.

She said she did not have the opportunity to be educated because her parents sent her to work as a househelp at the age of seven, until she got married.

She recalled that before the DepEd's Basic Literacy Program, she had worked as a househelp in various households but she did not know how much she had been paid for her labor.

"Sometimes, they gave me rice, sugar, coffee or milk and little amount of money," Elominada said. *Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

GRADUATES

TROY MALCOLM/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Filipino soldiers who finished a training program on antiterrorism tactics shake hands with their American trainers during graduation rites at the program's end.

Pampanga gov's power on contracts clipped

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The provincial board of Pampanga did not grant Gov. Mark Lapid authority to enter into contracts for projects covered by the province's 20 percent development fund.

In Resolution 139 approved on Monday, Lapid was allowed to contract out only goods and equipment worth P25.9 million; non-office account, P16.5 million; livelihood loans P6 million; and calamity fund, P22 million.

Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao, the board's presiding officer, said the board did not give Lapid a blanket authority to use the development fund.

The fund, appropriated with P121.9 million in the P670-million 2004 provincial budget, has a balance of P67.6 million.

It was the single biggest item in the five-item list requested by provincial budget officer Nida Manalad for Lapid.

Lapid, as chair of the provincial bids and awards committee, asked the board to give him authority to enter into contracts for supplies and civil works in accordance with Republic Act 9184 or the new law on government procurement system.

Last week, the resolution faced rough sailing. Twelve board members demanded a detailed list of proposed expenditures from the local finance committee.

In the Aug. 23 session, the committee was put to task for allowing Lapid to enter into contracts without the authority of the board.

Manalad and provincial lawyer Regina Guarin admitted to the lapse, saying it was only after a national government-sponsored workshop in early August that the implementing rules of RA 9184 was clarified to them.

Board Member Eduardo Chu, the only lawyer in the board, proposed to exclude the development fund from Lapid's control.

Guiao earlier asserted the board's power to strictly monitor the spending of the development fund to avoid a repeat of controversies involving negotiated contracts.

He was referring to the P100-million contracts during the last term of the governor's father, now Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid.

The development funds contained critical items like the construction, maintenance and repair of roads, bridges, hospitals, artesian wells and water systems and materials of pathways.

Guiao said the board was "not in bad terms" with the governor. The monitoring system over funds, he said, was part of the board's mandate.

In a related development, more than half of the province's P30-million calamity fund has already been spent even as the province dealt with its first major calamity, the widespread flooding in the province, last week. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Napocor says opening of dam didn't worsen floods

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The release of water from the San Roque Dam in San Manuel, Pangasinan did not aggravate the flooding in the province or in neighboring Tarlac, an official of the National Power Corp. said.

The discharge was confined to the Agno River and not to tributaries leading to Urdaneta and Dagupan cities, and the towns of Bayambang and Manaoag, according to Alex Palada, chief of the Napocor's Flood Forecasting and Warning Systems for Dam Operation (FFSWDO).

Palada said the dam began releasing water at 5 p.m. on Aug. 26, doing that gradually by opening the gate starting at a meter until it reached the maximum opening of 16 meters.

At its peak until 10 a.m. of Aug. 27, the dam released 3,000 cubic meters of water per second.

On Aug. 30, the volume went down to 500 cubic meters per second. Also on that day, the water elevation at the dam reached 282.9 meters, up from its normal level of 280 meters.

"In the course of our operations, the dam accommodated 240 million cubic meters of water, which is big," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. He referred to the monsoon rains induced by Typhoons Marce and Chaba last week.

In contrast, the dam took in only 100 million cubic meters of water during the height of Typhoon Igme in the first week of July, he said.

The release of water, Palada said, was "coordinated" with local government officials. "We issued adequate warnings," he added.

The FFSWDO relayed the same warning to at least six remote-controlled stations along the Agno River, he said.

"We had to ensure the stability of the dam," he said. He also said the dam did not suffer any damage.

In Pampanga, the provincial board in Monday's regular session approved a resolution convening a flood summit in the province.

The proponent, Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao, said the summit would try to "coordinate, integrate and synchronize" the anti-flooding measures being undertaken by the Department of Public Works and Highways, provincial, municipal and barangay governments.

Through the summit, Board Member Lilia Pineda said she also wanted to find out why despite the huge funds funneled into flood mitigating measures, Pampanga continued to experience serious flooding.

For instance, the DPWH spent P3.5-billion in Japanese loan for flood-control work along the Pasig-Potrero River.

In a separate resolution, Board Member Aurelio Gonzales urged the DPWH to study the structural integrity of the Arnedo Dike.

Built at the time of the American colonial government, this dike snakes from Arayat to Apalit towns. It protects six riverside towns from the strong currents of the Pampanga River that drains 30 river systems in Central Luzon.

ROUNDUP

Gas dealer apologizes

Total
SORRY
21.00

BAY, Laguna—A gasoline dealer here, whose station was reported by the INQUIRER on Tuesday as deceiving commuters, sent its apologies on Tuesday. In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER, Total gasoline dealer Emy Divinaflor said bad weather and the shortcoming of a gasoline worker caused the two incidents of price discrepancies. "It was not intended (to cheat commuters). I admonished my gasoline worker...to adjust the fuel price displays and report to me promptly if he has difficulty doing his job. This will not happen again," Divinaflor said. INQUIRER reported on Tuesday that on Aug. 23, this correspondent caught the station charging him P21 per liter when its price display showed that the price was a little more than P20 only. This was the second time the INQUIRER observed this practice done by the station, prompting this correspondent to request the gasoline boy to warn his bosses of the deception.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Transport head shot dead

CALAMBA CITY—Two unidentified assailants gunned down the leader of a transport group in Tondo, Manila near a transport terminal in Barangay Luzviminda 1 in Dasmariñas, Cavite just before dawn Tuesday. Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police director, identified the victim as Gregorio Gamba, 44, and president of the Delpan Jeepney Drivers Association. He said Gamba was sitting inside a passenger jeep at about 5 a.m. when two gunmen came and shot him repeatedly. The victim died on the spot after suffering at least five bullet wounds in the chest and head. Police have yet to determine the motive of the killing.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Quezon councilor slain

LUCENA CITY—A municipal councilor from Dolores, Quezon was shot dead by two unidentified assailants Saturday, a police report said. Noelito Cabrera, 49, resident of Barangay Bungoy, Dolores was filling up the tank of a passenger jeep in his own gasoline station in Barangay Bulakin at around 5:45 a.m. when the gunmen aboard a red motorcycle shot him four times in different parts of the body with a .45 cal. pistol. Policemen from the nearby station, which is only some 200 meters from the crime scene, immediately chased the fleeing gunmen but lost them. Cabrera was rushed to a hospital in San Pablo City but was pronounced dead on arrival.

Dellin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

New Mindoro cop chief

CITY OF CALAPAN—Philippine National Police Chief Director General Edgardo Aglipay installed Senior Supt. Marcos L. Flores, a native of Tarlac, on Aug. 25 as new provincial director for Oriental Mindoro. Flores replaced Senior Supt. Voltaire Calzado who is now assigned to the regional office. He vowed to support Aglipay's campaign against Taba (*tamad, abusado, bastos, ayaw padisiplina*) policemen to promote Care (courtesy, action, result, example) in the PNP and continue the fight against illegal drugs.

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Increase in ship rates

CITY OF CALAPAN—A group of drivers and operators are opposing the new lane metering system for roll-on/roll-off vessels plying the Calapan-Batangas route. The system was based on an order from the Department of Transportation and Communication, in which vehicles are measured according to length multiplied by P8.05 (charge per meter). Then this is multiplied by 24 nautical miles, which is the distance from Calapan port to Batangas port. Edgar de Luna, secretary of the Samahan ng mga Tawid-Dagat na Tsuper at Operator ng Oriental Mindoro, filed the complaint before the provincial board, which was set to pass a resolution condemning the increase in rates. It emphasizes on the effect of the new system on the province as part of the Strong Republic Nautical Highway, which is intended to speed up travel from Luzon to Mindanao on an economical budget *Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

'She's just too kind to die this way'

By Marlon Ramos
City of Sta. Rosa

THE MOMENT Abigail Carvajal, 29, heard of the news that her mother Melita, a leader of a women's group, was shot and killed by an assassin in front of their house in Barangay Dila in Laguna's City of Santa Rosa on Friday, the horror of her father's death kept flashing back in her mind.

Pedro Carvajal, then 38, who ran the family's construction supply store, was gunned down by a policeman over a traffic altercation in 1990. The gunman remains at large, while his cohort was shot dead a few days after the murder.

"It was like a bad dream," Abigail lamented. "They were killed in almost the same way—they were killed at about 8:30 a.m. They were both treacherously shot four times."

Since her father's death, Abigail said her mother, popularly known as Tita or Ate Mely in the community, became the sole breadwinner of the family. With sheer perseverance, Melita was able to send all her three children to college.

Abigail is now a resident obstetrician at the San Juan de Dios Medical Hospital in Manila. Her older brother, a nurse, was working in Kuwait, while their youngest is employed in Manila.

Abigail and her relatives could not imagine why someone wanted to kill Melita, a caring and loving person, even to others. "My mother would even give up our last money just to help others. She was just too kind to die this way," she said.

But to Carvajal's brother, Chit Trinidad, and to members of the Mamamayan ng Sta. Rosa para sa Kagalingan, Kaunlaran at Kapayapaan tungo sa Magandang Kinabukasan (MSRK3), her death was no surprise.

Trinidad, 44, believed that Carvajal's activities with the MSRK3, an alliance of residents who had opposed the cityhood of Sta. Rosa, triggered the killing.

Lifestyle check

He said his elder sister, together with small businessmen and urban poor groups, organized the MSRK3 as a watchdog of local government officials whom they suspected of amassing questionable wealth.

Carvajal, the group's leader and founder, was particularly critical of the proposed cityhood "because (we believe that) it would only burden the small businessmen and ordinary citizens of Sta. Rosa," Trinidad added.

Carvajal had filed a petition before the Supreme Court to nullify the results of a plebiscite conducted on June 10 that led to the once rustic town's cityhood.

Carvajal, he said, had initiated the residents' request for a "lifestyle check" on local government officials.

"Ate Mely and several hundreds of residents deemed these officials had illegally acquired their immense wealth. She feared that converting the town into a city would only aggravate the corruption in the local government," Trinidad said during the wake of his sister.

Trinidad said Carvajal had also denounced the demolition of hundreds of houses on a lot being claimed by the owners of subdivision developer Andasol/Promenade in Barangay Pulong Sta. Cruz.

CARVAJAL: She was always ready to help other people and would even share the last centavo in her pocket.

The demolition led to violent confrontations between policemen and the residents.

Late bloomer

Trinidad said his sister began to be involved in mass actions only three years ago.

Carvajal became popular because of her being helpful to other people, especially the disadvantaged, he said. "Ate Mely was always there, ready to help other people. She would even share the last centavo in her pocket."

"But she was firm," he added, "and ready to fight for the rights of ordinary citizens."

Residents had persuaded her to run for councilor during the last elections, but she ended up 14th in the race for the eight seats in the city council.

Destiny

Trinidad said a life-changing experience had prompted Carvajal to join the protest movement. Sometime in 2001, Carvajal saw how hired men and policemen dispersed hundreds of residents who opposed the demolition of over 800 houses in Pulong Sta. Cruz.

"Ate Mely went to the area to check on her business stall located in the area. Maybe, the incident was somehow set for her to see how our government and the police treat people fighting for their right to a decent life," Trinidad said.

For Carvajal's friend, Luz Baculo, secretary general of the Pagkakaisa ng mga Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan, her role in organizing women is a destiny.

"Even her birthday, March 8, falls on the International Women's Day," Baculo said.

She said Carvajal served as an inspiration to other women threatened by demolition.

Baculo remembered how Mely stood by the eight women arrested and jailed by the police during a demolition last year. "She could have posted bail, but she stayed with the women until all of them were taken into custody by the nuns of the St. Scholastica's College," she said.

Last year, Carvajal was asked to become the chair for Sta. Rosa of the partylist group Gabriela.

Trinidad said Carvajal had received several death threats a few weeks before she was killed. But his sister ignored the warnings, saying "all things will happen if it's bound to happen."

"Ate Mely never believed in death threats. She said she didn't want to burden her children and other relatives about the threats," Trinidad lamented.

Mistaken identity

SOLAR Films Inc. president Wilson Tieng has denied owning any piece of land in Laguna, contrary to what was reported in the story that came out in the Aug. 28 issue of the INQUIRER titled "Militant women's group leader slain."

The story quoted Luz Baculo, secretary general of the Pagkakaisa ng mga Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan, as saying that Carvajal's helping the settlers of a disputed land in Barangay Pulong Sta. Cruz might have led to her killing. The story further quoted Baculo as saying Carvajal helped residents of a land being claimed by businessman Wilson Tieng of Solar Films Inc.

PDI Laguna correpondent Marlon Ramos said he had confused the disputed land where Carvajal was involved as that one in Cavite, which he had also written about earlier.

"It was my mistake. I apologize to Mr. Wilson Tieng or the Solar Films Inc.," Ramos said.

Bicol radioman gives peace a chance on air

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Legazpi City

THERE'S hope for peace, according to an Albay-based radio broadcaster, citing this story as an example.

On Aug. 26, the air lanes of Legazpi City became the negotiating table between Communist Party spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal and Army Brig. Gen. Ramon Santos, which paved the way for the release two days later of two militiamen captured by New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Albay.

For about 20 minutes, Rosal and Santos, head of the 901st Infantry Brigade, swapped ideas on how to achieve peace amid increasing cases of government soldiers held by the NPA.

Johnny Dematera of the public affairs program "Bicol Target" of radio station dzGB hosted the dialogue on the air, a day after rebels belonging to the NPA's Santos Binamira Command captured two members of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) in Camalig town.

A week earlier, the NPA's Romulo Jallores Command released two Army soldiers in Presentacion town in neighboring Camerines Sur.

The Albay rebels seized Allan Madara and Henry Nabor on Aug. 24. They had thought that the two were Army soldiers based in Barangay Tagoytoy, Camalig. The militiamen are attached to the Army detachment in the nearby village of Taladong.

DEMATERA: Host of dialogue on air between military and communist rebel leaders.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DZGB-AM

Phone interviews

Dematera coordinated with key personalities of the communist movement and the Army through phone interviews during his program. He succeeded in getting Rosal's confirmation of the capture of Madara and Nabor after the CPP leader contacted the NPA unit operating in Albay. Madara and Nabor had been reported missing earlier.

In another interview, Dematera also confirmed the capture from the spokesperson of the CPP-led National Democratic Front in Bicol, Greg Bañares. Reporters of dzGB had fed appeals from Nabor's family to spare their son's life and free the militiamen.

Nabor's mother even cried on air as Dematera was talking with Bañares. The NDF leader assured the families of the Cafgu members that they were being treated humanely and that they would be released immediately upon clearance from their captors.

Handover

Dematera said an NPA contact on Friday night informed him by phone of the release of Madara and Nabor on Saturday morning and requested him to receive them somewhere in Albay.

"Conscious of the security procedures of the NPA rebels, I quietly gathered my crew with no mention of the release and proceeded to the specified place where the two militias were to be turned over," he revealed.

Dematera said he was not surprised that Madara and Nabor were mistaken as Army soldiers because most of the Cafgu members were armed with high-powered weapons.

All the rebels he saw seemed to be in their late 20s and 40s, he said.

An NPA rebel, who introduced himself as Ka Medel, handed over the militiamen to Dematera at about 10 a.m. The broadcaster was informed that the former captives were given P500 each for transportation, and personal items, such as soap and toothpaste.

Dematera said the turnover happened very quickly as the NPA rebels were anticipating a counteroffensive from the Army once information reached the command unit of Madara and Nabor in the nearby village.

Tearful reunion

The militiamen were whisked off into a van and brought to the dzGB station, where their loved ones nervously awaited them since early morning of Saturday.

The families of Madara and Nabor burst into tears during their reunion, Dematera said.

He said he realized how quickly the NPA rebels responded to the appeals even without the suspension of military and police operations.

But Dematera recalled that he was amazed with the outcome of the live discussion between Rosal and Santos that kept listeners posted to the program.

"I was impressed with the way Ka Roger and General Santos rationally and professionally deliberated before the public their parallel positions of attaining peace through continuous dialogue. Should I still doubt that there is hope for peace if only the NPA rebels and the government hammer out differences in ideology through continuing peace talks?" he said.

3-month-old baby now sees both sides of the world

By Jocelyn Uy and Emir Gamis

THIS TIME, she can see both sides of the world, thanks to Good Samaritans.

Marissa Gutlay, the 3-month-old baby who was afflicted with nasofrontal encephalocele, is a step closer to recovery as she finally went under the knife at the National Children's Hospital in Quezon City about a month ago.

Eleanor Hagos, a friend of Marissa's mother from Sorsogon who accompanied and assisted them during their stay in Manila, said the large bulge in the baby's face had been reduced and was no longer hampering her movements.

"*Matabaon na siya* (She has gained weight)," Hagos noted.

The baby will be christened in Butag chapel in Bulan town in Sorsogon this Saturday.

Marissa's condition is a rare congenital disorder in the nervous system. She was born with a gap in the skull.

Anomaly

Doctors say such anomaly occurs in one out of 1,000 live births, during the first month upon conception when the nervous system of the fetus is developed.

The soft, irregular growth—the size of a basketball—on Marissa's temple had weighed down her face, obstructing her eyes and nose. Due to the weight of the bulge, she was often confined to one of her sides; she would cry to signal her mother that she would like to be turned over to the other side.

After the operation, the first of two procedures, she can now move her head unaided.

When the INQUIRER visited them in a small room at the White Cross Children's Home in San Juan, Miriam was carrying her daughter without difficulty. Before, she had to put a pillow underneath the baby's head to support the bulge.

Marissa can also be propped up to a sitting position. "She can move freely now. And she doesn't cry too much anymore," Miriam said.

The woman said her daughter might become a ballerina someday. "She always hoists her legs up," Miriam said.

Charity

Through the spirit of charity, Miriam and Marissa were welcomed at the White Cross Children's Home a week before the operation.

Lina Santiago, whose sister, Ma. Victoria Concepcion, is the vice president of the board of directors of White Cross, read about the Gutlays' plight in the INQUIRER, said Mely Vargas, acting administrator of the facility.

"She told her sister about the Gutlays and since there was space here at White Cross, they were taken in," Vargas said over the phone.

The two occupied a room inside the hall, where nursery classes are also being held. The room has two beds, a refrigerator and a television, as well as a small bathroom and reception area.

Santiago also provided Marissa's basic needs, such as milk, diapers, food and clothes, Vargas added.

Miriam had brought only two clothes with her because she thought their stay at the NCH would be brief.

The operation on July 23 had to be reset for another week as Marissa developed cough and colds. It was a successful procedure, said neurosurgeon Dr. Benedicto Baronia of the NCH.

Plastic surgery

One-fourth of the bulge is still present, which will be important on the last procedure, the corrective or plastic surgery, Baronia said.

"The bulge is still significant, but I left it that way to provide much skin for the plastic surgery. The skin from the bulge will be used for the reconstruction of her nose," Baronia said.

The next procedure is scheduled for January, which will be performed by plastic surgeon Dr. Ed Gonzales, also of the NCH.

Before they left Manila for Sorsogon, Miriam was told that Marissa should visit the hospital once a month for a checkup. But Hagos said they might not be able to bring Marissa to Manila once a month.

"They don't have enough money to spend for the fare anymore," she said. They even had to borrow money for the bus fare to Sorsogon. The fare for the Legazpi-Manila route, costs up to P500 per passenger. Air-conditioned buses charge higher.

But they would definitely be in Manila in time for the second operation, Hagos said.

The expenses will still be shouldered by the Philippine Band of Mercy, a foundation for poor children, based in Malate, Manila. White Cross will also accommodate them again.

"We are really thankful to the people who are helping us," Miriam said, with joy in her eyes.

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METROBRIEFS

JI suspects moved

THE MANILA Regional Court (RTC) has ordered the transfer of detention of two alleged Jemaah Islamiyah members tagged in the 2000 Rizal Day bombing. RTC Branch 29 Judge Cielito Grulla issued the temporary commitment order on Tuesday for Mamasa Naga and Abdul Pata to the Philippine National Police Custodial Force at the PNP Headquarters in Camp Crame. Since their arrest in Marawi City on Aug. 2, Naga, alias Zainal Paks, and Pata, alias Mohamad Amir, had been under Army detention in Fort Bonifacio. *Tarra V. Quismundo*

8 armed men caught

EIGHT men suspected to be members of the New People's Army were arrested by members of the Central Police District at a checkpoint early yesterday morning in Quezon City. Arrested were Eric Ignacio, 25; Rafael Santos, 24; Ramil Oliva, 25; Mariano Garcia, 24; and Ronnie Garcia, 20, all of Montalban, Rizal; Joven Bartulay, 44; Inocentes Dahang, 59, both of Quezon City; and Rey Francisco, 20, of Norzagaray, Bulacan. They yielded six high-powered firearms when stopped at a checkpoint along Molave Street, Barangay Payatas around 2 a.m. *Tina G. Santos*

Gas station boycott

A TRANSPORT leader yesterday vowed to boycott gas retailers in Quezon City which local treasury officials said had cheated consumers. Mar Garvida, president of the Pinagkaisang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide, said he had advised his members to avoid filling up at the 44 stations included in the city's list of delinquent gas dealers. But city teasurer Victor Endriga said it was now safer to gas up in the 44 gasoline stations, saying these had already been properly calibrated. *Tina G. Santos*

A star for Aglipay

THE NATIONAL Police Commission has recommended the promotion of Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay to Director General after he was appointed on Aug. 18 as the new Philippine National Police chief. The promotion is mandated under Section 29 of Republic Act No. 6975 or the PNP Law. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

A smelly affair

ALL PASIG City policemen had to do was follow the smell to find out why there was foul odor along a street in Barangay Sta. Lucia. They stumbled upon Romeo Taglay, 30; Benny Caladro, 29; and Ramil Gomez, 21, on Ortigas Extension around 11 p.m. while the three illegally dumping refuse into a canal. They are employees of "EMB Excavation and Plumbing Services." Two patrolling policeman chanced upon their truck (URV 651) parked along the street. The employees reportedly even offered P500 to the lawmen. *Luige A. del Puerto*

'English-only zones' set in Manila

By Tarra V. Quismundo

WATCH your tongue.

Students of the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila (PLM) were warned as the city began implementing its English only policy in the school.

The campus has been divided into language zones where students and faculty should be conscious of how they speak.

Starting this month, PLM's 10,000 students would have to speak in English in designated "English Zones" and at given English-speaking hours.

So called "Free Zones," where students may speak in any language they wish, have also been designated.

"We would like to create an environment where if you speak in Filipino in English Zones, you will not get an answer," PLM president Benjamin Tayabas told the INQUIRER.

The creation of the "speaking zones" are stated in Pamantasan administrative order No. 15-2004, which lays down PLM's English Proficiency Program.

English Zones include classrooms, faculty lounges, offices, lobby and corridors, where the PLM population should speak and converse in English from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., and again from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Next semester, the "English Hours" in these places will be from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and again from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Classrooms and offices have been designated as strictly English only areas, where students and teachers must speak straight English throughout the day.

The "Free Zones," where speaking in English is optional, include the university canteen, restrooms, open field, quadrangle and gymnasium.

"I think over a period of one year, we should be very comfortable in speaking in English," Tayabas said confidently.

He added that teachers would be tapped to encourage an environment where students would be prompted to speak in English.

Tayabas said they were trying to tap the power of peer pressure in influencing others.

"Teachers will serve as models and we will implement a system where students will be reporting teachers who don't speak English in classrooms," he said.

PLM is the first of the three city-operated colleges to implement this program, which is aimed at making students feel comfortable in using English in their daily lives.

Also slated to implement the program are the City College of Manila and Eulogio Amang Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology.

However, Tayabas said the schools have yet to begin its implementation and might follow suit before the end of the current semester.

A WALK THROUGH LETRE ERIK ARAZAS
Rain and flood fail to dampen the spirit of Malabon City residents who go about their lives in spite of the frequent rise of water in many of their neighborhoods. Above, students and other city folk—many managing to smile—wade through flooded Letre Road.

Wrong time kills woman in Makati mishap

A TRUCK driver who tried to resist apprehension for violating the truck ban accidentally killed a pedestrian in Makati City Tuesday night.

Driver Ernesto Galindo tried to drive off and hit Rochelle Jasmin Latina, 27, of Mandaluyong City.

Investigator SPO1 Miguel Descalzo said Galindo was driving over the Makati-Mandaluyong bridge when a traffic enforcer tried to flag him down.

Mandaluyong traffic enforcer Renato Alvarez said it was 8:15 p.m. and still within the time during which trucks were prohibited from plying Metro Manila's roads.

However when accosted, Galindo, said that it was already 9 p.m. on his watch, thus the ban on trucks had ended.

The law prohibits trucks from travelling from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Galindo did not stop and continued driving towards Makati. This prompted Alvarez to jump onto the side of the truck in an effort to have the driver pull over.

Suddenly, the 10-wheel truck veered to the right and ran over Latina, who was then walking toward Makati.

Later, Galindo said that the truck went wayward because Alvarez grabbed the wheel.

Alvarez denied the driver's claim and even added that two truck helpers ganged up on him.

At the Makati Traffic Enforcement Group Office, Galindo continued to insist that it was 9 p.m. when Alvarez accosted him.

However, Descalzo pointed out that it was already an hour after the incident and it was only 9:10 p.m. on the station wall clock.

Nancy Carvajal

New woes hit rehab of Tullahan bridge

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE TULLAHAN bridge on MacArthur Highway in Valenzuela City needs immediate replacement but reasons leading to delays in construction just keep on coming.

Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian said he would not allow the project to begin until the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) finds a way to build the bridge without having to shut it down.

The other day, Gatchalian told DPWH officials to "reevaluate (their) construction strategy" so that they would just partially close the bridge.

Business endangered

The mayor said completely closing the bridge, which connects Metro Manila and Bulacan, would kill business in the city.

The existing plan, which the DPWH hopes to implement by December, will require the total closure of the 64-year-old bridge.

Project director Gil Villanueva said the proposal to close only half of the bridge during construction would be impossible with the P50 million budget for the project.

He said they would be using heavy equipment during the construction and these would eat up much space.

But DPWH Undersecretary Bashir Rasuman told the INQUIRER yesterday they were already considering partial closure.

Tanong ng Bayan
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ABC Tuwing Huwebes, 8pm
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Bawasan ang pork barrel, o tuluyan nang tanggalin?
Narito ang ilan sa mga sagot ninyo. Abangan ang winning entry ngayong alas-8 ng gabi, sa InqTV on ABC!
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Fernando Nieves, Naga City
"let s do away w/ pork barrel cmpletely! I dat happens, cme nxt elections, we ll c serious, sincere n well meaning legislators."
Hubert Halili, Caloocan

An outrageous decision

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was fuming as she watched Palace Undersecretary Nolan Sison and media practitioner Tim Orbos try to extort money from officials of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) on videotape. The proceedings were caught by a hidden camera-cum-microphone.

She immediately fired Sison.

But some officials are asking why the President spared Media and Ecclesiastical Affairs Secretary Dodie Limcauco since the two were his boys.

Limcauco is believed to be the head of the Phlippine Monitoring Group (PMG), a shadowy organization composed of media people that allegedly extort money from middle and top government officials in exchange for not exposing their "sins."

Sison, Orbos and Richard Rivera, former newscaster of RPN 9, were allegedly the prime movers of PMG, with Limcauco at the helm.

My sources said the President was doing a "killing me softly" approach in dealing with Limcauco because of his supposedly very strong connections with the Catholic Church.

If that were so, were some members of the Catholic clergy involved with the PMG?

***

Johnny Ramos, spokesperson of Ambassador to Bahrain Amable Aguiluz V, denied Orbos' boast to DOTC officials that his boss paid Limcauco P5 million in exchange for the ambassadorial post.

Aguiluz, president of AMA Group of Companies, got the position through merit, Ramos said.

"Why would he have to give money for a position that he never sought in the first place? He was chosen by the President," said the spokesperson.

Orbos probably wanted to get back at Aguiluz, Ramos said, because his car was confiscated by Aguiluz's AMA Bank for failing to settle a personal loan with the bank.

***

PO1 Benedict Mamaril of the police Special Action Force, in a drunken stupor, went on a shooting rampage in his hometown in Malasiqui, Pangasinan, last year.

He shot with his M-16 rifle two boys aged 12 and 16 who were bringing a cow to market. Luckily, Mamaril missed, but the cow lay dead after the rampage.

My program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," helped the families of the two boys file an administrative complaint with the Internal Affairs Office (IAS) in Pangasinan.

You know the punishment meted out on the abusive cop? Only a monthlong suspension! The offense would have merited his dismissal from the service without prejudice to the criminal case in court.

The decision is outrageous!

***

The IAS was created by Congress to police the police. Although it is part of the PNP, it's independent of it. The IAS head, who has the title of inspector general, cannot be dictated upon by the PNP chief.

But IAS has not been doing its job of policing the PNP ranks.

Why? Because most of its members are policemen who still maintain ties in the spirit of camaraderie with regular PNP members. And also because its present chief, lawyer Alexis C. Canonizado, is presumed to be a weakling.

It's high time IAS members were recruited from the civilian sector.

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Compiled by L. Manguiat

TENNIS: 2004 US Open; 7 a.m. (r- 7 p.m.) and 11 p.m.; Star Sports—Catch the first and second rounds from New York.

BASKETBALL: EBC; 9:30 a.m.; Solar Sports—Witness streetball at its finest from Rucker Park.

NBA Summer League—Spurs vs Nuggets; 11 a.m. (r-10 p.m.); Solar Sports—San Antonio takes on Denver in this off-season duel.

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FEP SEAL

Ritualo gets ₱11-M deal from Express

By June Navaro

WITH a megabuck deal, FedEx appointed its new take-charge guy.

Two weeks after trading veteran scorer Vergel Meneses, FedEx kept the services of Renren Ritualo, signing the cat-quick sharpshooter to a three-and-a-half year deal worth a little over P11 million.

Ritualo will receive P225,000 a month on the first year of his new contract then P250,000 and P275,000 on the two remaining seasons of the pact.

FedEx team owner Bert Lina personally handled the contract-signing and gave the 6-foot-1 swingman some pointers on how to invest his earnings.

RITUALO

Lina also gave Ritualo the go-signal to lead the Express' bid in the All-Filipino Cup slated Oct. 3 after sending Meneses to the Barakos in exchange for power-forward Homer Se.

"It depends on coach Joe (Lipa), if he wants me to take charge, I will," said Ritualo, the 2002 PBA Rookie of the Year and 2004 three-point shootout runner-up.

Ritualo led the Green Archers to four straight championships in the UAAP from 1998 to 2001 before joining the Express in 2002 as the eighth overall pick in the rookie draft. Ritualo bagged the Sixth Man award in 2003.

Se, meanwhile, will have to shell out a part of his salary after getting involved in a scuffle with Purefoods forward Richard Yee during a tuneup game Sunday.

Se and Yee were fined by the PBA Commissioner's Office after figuring in a shoving match and triggering a bench-clearing incident during a tuneup game. Yee netted P5,000 for planting an elbow on the pesky Se.

The 6-5 bruiser retaliated by punching Yee's mid-section in front of the Hotdogs' bench, triggering a near riot as players and team officials from both clubs stormed onto the court.

PBA technical chief Perry Martinez said Se would be assessed a bigger penalty because it was not the first time the former Red Bull reserve got into a fight. Martinez declined to reveal the figures.

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NCAA FINAL FOUR

Altas, Dolphins 1-2

GAMES TOMORROW (*Rizal Coliseum*)
11:30 a.m.—JRU vs CSB (Jrs/Srs)
4 p.m.—Letran vs San Sebastian (Srs/Jrs)

Marc Anthony Reyes

UNIVERSITY of Perpetual Help-Dalta System and Philippine Christian University secured the top two slots in the Final Four—and the twice-to-beat bonus that comes with them—after downing their respective foes yesterday in the NCAA men's basketball at the Rizal Coliseum.

Dong Javier scored 24 points, grabbed 11 rebounds, issued five assists and made three steals as the Perpetual Help Altas outlasted the Mapua Cardinals, 71-63, to nail the No. 1 slot in the Final Four, which they last enjoyed four years ago.

Earlier, the PCU Dolphins trounced the San Beda Lions, 79-67, to finish their schedule at 10-4 like Perpetual, which took the No. 1 ranking due to a better quotient.

San Sebastian (7-6) only needs to win over defending champion and early semifinalist Letran (8-5) tomorrow to complete the Final Four cast. Otherwise, the three-way tie at 7-7 among SSC, San Beda and Mapua would eliminate the Stags due to an inferior quotient and pave the way for a sudden death for the No. 4 slot between the Lions and the Cardinals.

Forward Robert Sanz topscored with 24 points for PCU, which now wants to be known as Fighting Dolphins with their surprising transformation from doormat last year to No. 2 in the Final Four.

Credit for the turnaround went to veteran coach Loreto Tolentino, who took over from Jimmy Mariano after PCU finished eighth and last place in 2003.

"Before they were called the Dolphins," said Tolentino. "Now they will be called the Fighting Dolphins.

In the junior division, San Beda defeated PCU, 89-73, in a battle of teams already in the Final Four.

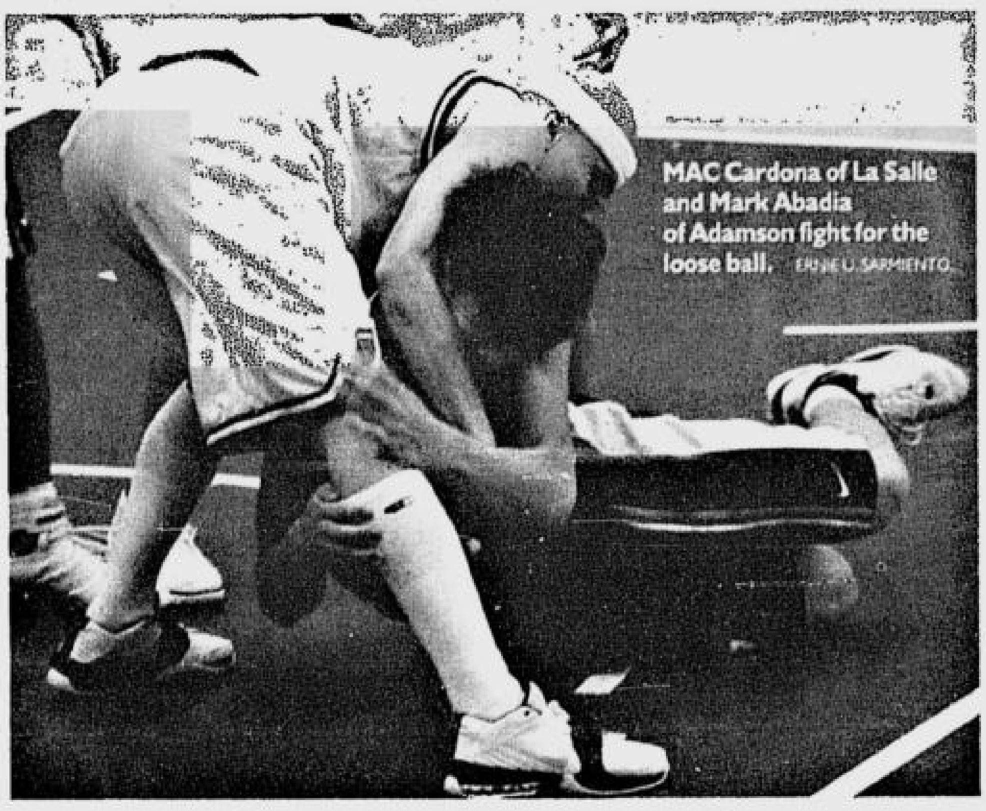
The Scores:

Third game (Srs)

UPHDS 71—Javier 24, Refuerzo 13, Joe 11, bauzon 10, Misa 6, Barnson 4, Cuenco 3.

Mapua 63—Sta. Maria 24, Gueverra 10, Co 9, Veranga 6, Salud 6, Gonzales 4, Mingraso 2, Tiongo.

Quarters: 15-10, 39-31, 52-46, 71-63.


MAC Cardona of La Salle and Mark Abadia of Adamson fight for the loose ball. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Archers oust Falcons

GAMES TODAY (*Philsports Arena*)
1:30 p.m.—FEU vs NU (Srs)
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs UP (Srs)
6 p.m.—Ateneo vs UP (Jrs)

By Jasmine W. Payo

LA SALLE is definitely back.

Mac Cardona led five Archers in double figures as La Salle knocked out the Adamson Falcons, 79-67, and zoomed to their fourth straight win in the 67th UAAP varsity basketball tournament yesterday at the Philsports Arena.

"It's a good win for us and hopefully we could sustain this run," said Archers coach Franz Pumaren, whose team had an alarming 4-4 start.

University of the East's Final Four dream seemed to be turning to reality after the Warriors clobbered the University of Santo Tomas Tigers, 77-59, behind Paolo Hubalde's 22-point performance.

"This was very crucial. UP is just behind us (in the team standings) so I kept telling my players that we should start out strong in the game," said UE coach Dindo Pumaren.

La Salle took third spot at 8-4, just half a game behind the Far Eastern Tamaraws, while UE held on to fourth at 7-5. UST bowed out of the semifinal race for the second straight year, along with Adamson, with similar 4-8 slates.

In junior play, the UST Tiger Cubs secured a twice-to-beat edge in the Final Four with an 81-53 win over the UE Pages.

The scores:

Third game (Srs)

La Salle 79—Cardona 16, Casio 14, Yeo 12, Gavino 12, Araña 10, Gaco 4, Cabatu 4, Maierhiffer 3, Benitez 3, Tang 1, Walsham 0, Villanueva 0, Galinato 0, Cua 0.

Adamson 67—Bono 21, Alonzo 17, Hate 7, Canuday 6, Poloyapoy 5, Tajonera 4, Abadia 4, Gandarosa 2, Cabahug 1, Agustin 0, Tiongco 0.

Quarters: 21-13, 45-35, 64-51, 79-67.

Geisler, Go, Rivero honored in taekwondo tilt

FINWEIGHT Raymond Villapa of Regional Philippines Taekwondo Contingent (RPTC) outkicked Jorge Rodriguez, 3-0, yesterday to lead three other bets who fashioned out shutout victories at the start of the Samsung Best of the Best National Taekwondo Championships at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City.

Olympians Donald Geisler III, Marie Antoinette Rivero and Tshomlee Go were honored for their gallant stand in Greece during the opening rites.

Shin Jil Sou, Minister and Consul General of the Embassy of Korea, Samsung president Sang Youl Eom and PTA (Philippine Taekwondo Association) vice president Sung Chon Hong graced the event with former Olympians Bea Lucero and Monsour del Rosario.

Others who hurdled their first round assignments in the finweight class of the seniors division were Mandy del Rosario, Hector Arellano of Air Force, Armyman Angelito Ong, Terence Boteja of Laguna, Davao's Rolly Pentecostes and Jeffrey Clata of Pangasinan.

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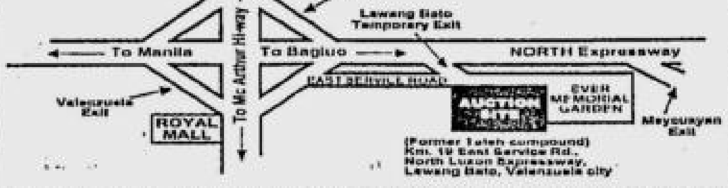

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NISSAN

Subic Bay netter eyes Bundesliga

By Dennis U. Eroa

BARRING a major hitch, Davis Cupper Patrick John Tierro is set to make history as the first Filipino to compete in the prestigious Bundesliga, also known as the German National Interclub Championship.

Known for his all-around court sense, Tierro is presently campaigning in tough European tournaments, particulary in Germany.

Out of the four events Tierro has entered, the pride of the Subic Bay International Tennis Center has reached the semifinals twice after going through the qualifying rounds.

Players with ATP rankings and former world-ranked players saw action in those events. Managed by Virgilio "Beeyong" Sison of Subic Bay Sports Management Inc., Tierro's trip is sponsored by sportsman Jean Henri Lhuillier of Cebuana Lhuillier.

Sison, who also thanked SBMA chair Felicito 'Tong' Payumo for his support, said that five German clubs are offering Tierro contracts for the Bundesliga. This includes travel expenses plus incentives.

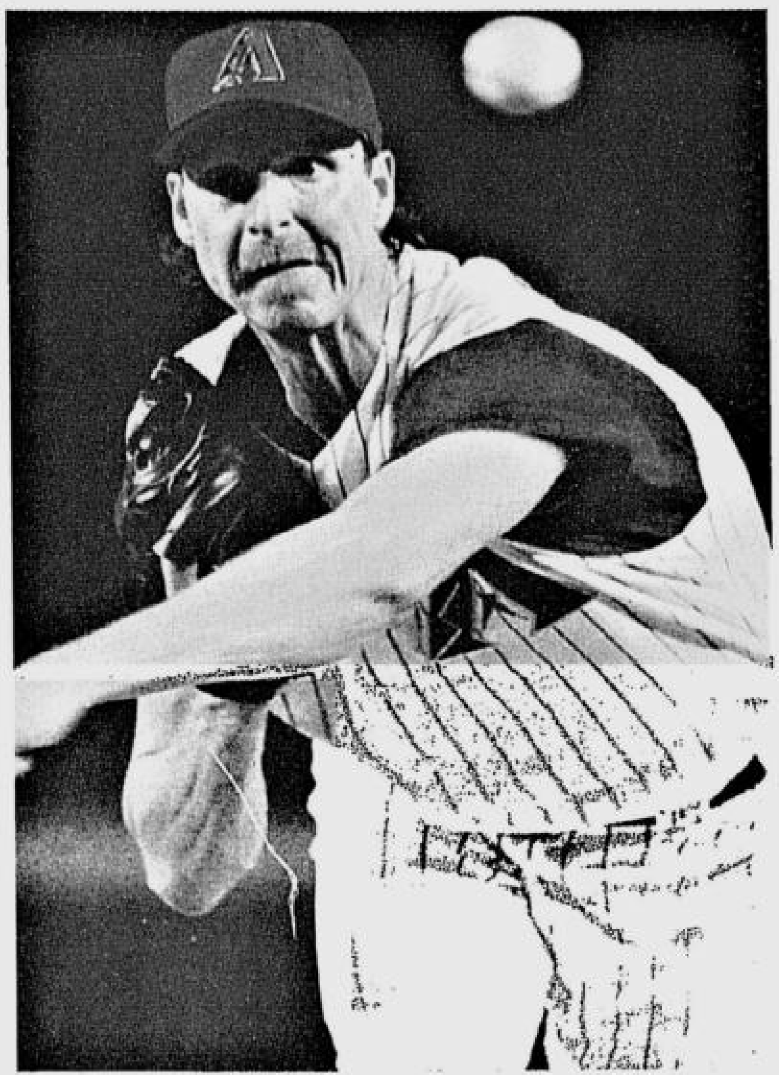
"The experience against world-class foes will certainly benefit PJ as he prepares to compete in the SEA Games next year," said Sison.

According to Sison and Lhuillier, the overseas stint is a great opportunity for the 6-foot-1 Tierro to make his base in Europe and at the same time sustain himself financially while exposing himself to the European brand of tennis. Sison and Lhuillier expect Tierro to make an impact on the ATP tour in two to three years.

"PJ needs to play as many matches as he could on the European clay courts for him to develop a solid all-around game," noted Sison, who lived in Europe for 17 years and is extending his vast connections and expertise to talents like Tierro.

"If this is the kind of program structure we can sustain in the next few years, there is no telling what Philippine tennis can achieve in the future," added Lhuillier, who also funded PJ's trips last year to the Pat Cash Tennis Academy in Australia and the US.

Tierro competed in the Ludwigshafen-Tournier (July 15-18); Michaelsberg-Tournier (July 28-Aug.1); WTB-Circuit Den Roto-Filderpokal Tournier (Aug. 4-8); and SWN-CUP Tournier from Aug.11-15.



STRIKEOUT: Arizona Diamondbacks Randy Johnson delivers a pitch to Los Angeles Dodgers David Ross, for Johnson's 15th strikeout of the game, during the eighth inning, Tuesday. Los Angeles won, 4-1. AP

SPORTSWATCH

Marathon to usher in 2005 SEAG

A SEA of humanity will fill Luneta Park when the 2nd Manila Marathon fires off this October. Arnold "Ali" Atienza, chair of the organizing Manila Sports Council (Masco), said the event will usher in the country's hosting of the 2005 Southeast Asian Games. Manila Mayor Lito Atienza will lead the runners when they are flagged off on Roxas Boulevard (between the Rizal Monument and Quirino Grandstand). The race will begin at 4 a.m. and will run through Tondo, Quiapo, Binondo, Sampaloc, Singalong, San Andres, Malate and back to the Luneta Park. The 10-km, 5-km and 3-km races will start at 6 a.m.

Team MayniLA Hong Kong-bound

TEAM MayniLA-Philippines leaves today to compete in the 2004 Hong Kong Swimming Championships from Sept. 3-6 at the Kowloon Park Swimming Pool. "The team is in high spirits, all saddled up and raring to give honor and prestige for flag and country," said Arnold "Ali" Atienza, son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and chief of the Manila Sports Council (Masco). Team MayniLA is bannered by Tessa Paula Alcantara, Alethea Alcantara, Chrizel Naziz Lagunday, Ryan Paolo Arabejo, Malco Alron Dacanay, John Bryle Zapanta, and Matthew Tano. Remberto Lozado and Ronnie Rolle are coach and assistant coach, respectively. Rafael Borromeo is team manager while Hapee Lyn Sy will serve as liaison officer.

3 entries pace NCA Stag series opener

MULAWIN-A of Rudy Albano and Biboy Enriquez's twin entries Firebird I and II posted an immaculate 3-0 slate to lead the National Cockers Association's 7-Stag Derby series opener Tuesday at the Araneta Coliseum. Close behind were Jima Fer JVL SMRC-I of Joe Laureno; Jima Fer JVL-SMRC-IV of the Jingco Brothers; Cutting Edge Binangonan Balbina-BJ of Boy Jiao; and San Roque of Joey and Buboy delos Santos. Within sight were Cutting Edge Binangonan Balbina 13-BV and 14 of Jun Santiago; Palasal Secret-WJT of Jun Sagupaan Complexor 3000 of Patrick Antonio; Mapalad-Mulawin Dominator of Alex Escalona and Patrick Puno; MBJ of Boyet Joson; P.P.B.G. Bronco of Benjie Lim and Mulawin-FAU VG BJ of Frank Berin. The first leg champion of the series, presented by Univet Thunderbird Feeds and hosted by Jun and Rudy Jingco, Jet Fernando and Sons and Efren Canlas, will be decided today starting at 5 p.m.

Paragua shares 2nd-3rd places

FILIPINO IM Mark Paragua posted three wins, one draw and one loss in five games to share second to third places in the International Chess Title Tournament Alushta Autumn 2004 yesterday in Alushta, Ukraine. Paragua defeated Dimitriy Paramonov of Belarus and IM Roman Ovetchkin of Russia in Round 1 and 2 then yielded to IM Yuriy Kuzubov of Ukraine. Paragua bounced back by demolishing IM Alexander Alexikov of Ukraine in Round 4 and drawing with IM Sergey Vokarev of Russia in Round 5. Paragua has 3.5 points, the same output of Kuzubov who lost to Ovetchkin. Vokarev notched 4.0 points to grab the solo lead in the tournament which lured 16 players with an average Elo rating of 2453.

Pacific Internet pledges support

PACIFIC Internet, the country's leading Internet service provider, yesterday pledged to support the Filipino athletes in their bid to win the overall championship when the country hosts the Southeast Asian Games next year. "We failed to win a medal in the Olympics, but the brave front put up by our athletes, especially our taekwondo jins, boxers and archer, will not go unnoticed. For that amazing display of fighting spirit alone, our company believes winning the No. 1 spot in the SEA Games is attainable. "So allow PacNet to be the first from the private sector to pledge its support to the country's hosting of the SEA Games in 2005," PacNet president Jojie Yap said.

Centro Escolar dribblers nip New Era

CENTRO Escolar University flirted with defeat before beating New Era University, 67-66, in the 2004 Naascu men's basketball tournament at the NEU gym in Quezon City. Deo Carillo and Frederick Romulo combined for 28 points for the Scorpions, who kept their hopes alive with their sixth win in 12 matches. Carillo finished with 17 points, while Romulo added 11 points for CEU. William Ibay and Jeffrey de Guzman carried the fight for New Era with 15 and 13 points, respectively. The Scorpions also won over the Hunters, 74-63, on Aug. 10.

Generals stretch winning streak

THE EMILIO Aguinaldo Generals streaked to their ninth straight win at the expense of the Philippine School of Business Administration, 88-75, yesterday in the second round of the 3rd Universities and Colleges Athletics Association (Ucaa) seniors basketball tournament at the EAC gym. Ronjay Buenafe and Nino Sungco delivered anew for the Generals, combining for 33 points that included 12 in a fourth quarter binge. The Generals try to clinch win No.10 tomorrow against Colegio de San Lorenzo, which improved its slate to 5-4, same with PSBA, following a 75-68 win over La Salle-Dasmariñas.

NGAP bares new formula for RP team

By Musong R. Castillo

JUVIC Pagunsan welcomed the move, and the Philippines is looking forward to being represented by no one but the best and the willing in the World Amateur Team Golf championship in October.

The 26-year-old, along with possibly eight others, will play a 144-hole qualifying starting next week to determine the three players that will be sent to battle the planet's best in Puerto Rico.

The Philippines will be looking to at least duplicate a history-setting third place finish in the biennial event, coming up with a new formula in the selection of the members after finishing out of the medal in the Putra Cup recently.

No one was given an outright slot in the team and Pagunsan, together with Marvin Dumandan, reigning RP champ Jun Bernis, Putra Cup surprises Michael Bibat and Boyet Saragoza, Erwin Vinluan and Artemio Murakami, will start a tedious grind on Sept. 8.

Two others will be invited when Benny Gopez, the president of the governing NGAP, returns today after a stint in the World Senior Amateurs in the United States.

The venues of the qualifying event will be announced later, as all eight rounds will be played in different layouts to take the home course factor out of the way.

"We are glad that the players we talked to have welcomed the idea, including Juvic (Pagunsan)," said NGAP secretary general Luisito Fernandez, who will be the non-playing captain in Puerto Rico.

"He wants it, as a matter of fact, because he wants no one to question his inclusion on the team in the long run," added Fernandez, who started writing letters to golf courses for accommodation of the tryouts.

Fernandez and the rest of the board arrived at the new format after a long meeting with Putra Cup captain Jun Galindez, coach Roger Retuerto and delegation head Jake Ayson on Monday.

The Philippines finished a woeful fourth in Indonesia, its second worst in a 44-year history of participation in Southeast Asia's official team golf championship.

The NGAP has scheduled the qualifying in two separate weeks—Sept. 8-11 for the first 72 holes and Sept. 14-17 for the last 72.

Marcaida files cases versus NCFP, Estimo

A FORMER treasurer of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines has filed two cases against the NCFP, including an allegation that its secretary general, Sammy Estimo, had abused his power during the association's election of officers recently.

Constantino Marcaida sought the nullification of the NCFP elections, claiming there were violations of the NCFP charter and that Estimo failed to make a public accounting on the disbursement of the NCFP's funds.

But Estimo downplayed the cases filed before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court and claimed that both cases were one and the same. "He could be held in contempt because the two cases he filed are the same," Estimo, a lawyer, said.

Marcaida also sought a temporary restraining order for those who were elected in the July 31 polls while the cases are pending.

"Because of what Mr. Estimo did, as a member of the NCFP board, I have suffered a lot of sleepless nights, serious anxiety and wounded feelings," said Marcaida in a statement.

Marc Anthony Reyes

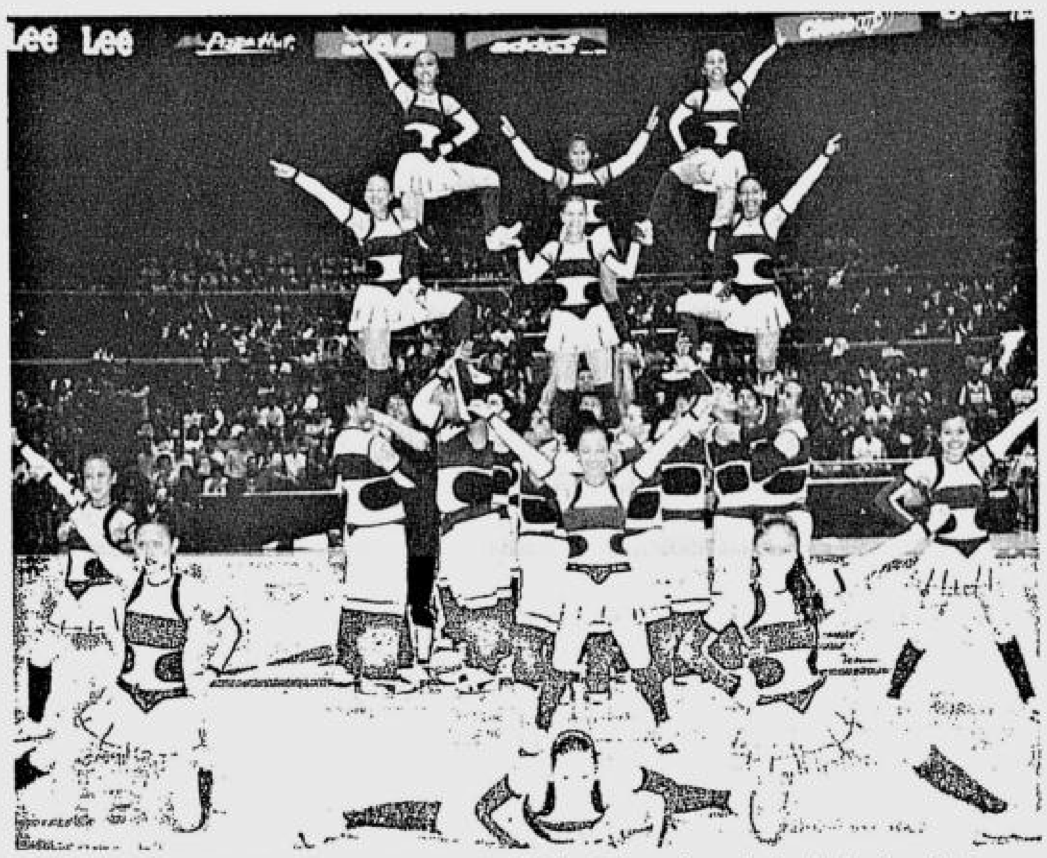
Korea, Japan join Asian MTB

SEVEN countries, led by South Korea and Japan, have confirmed their entries in the 10th Asian Mountain Bike Championships slated Oct. 7 to 10 in Puerto Princesa City.

Also assuring participation in the event are Malaysia, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Thailand and Nepal.

The event, which will feature competitions in the elite divisions of downhill and cross country, will be raced on a highly technical and challenging course in Sitio Magarwak, Barangay Sta. Lourdes, Puerto Princesa City.

For details, call 8794374, 8794378, 09272426673, 09162601992, 09178996336.



TRINITY CHEERERS: The Broncos Pep Squad of Trinity College shows their winning form in the cheering competition of the 10th Cusa (Colleges and Universities Sports Association).

Cebu revives semifinal bid

CEBU revived its hopes of reaching the semifinals by whipping Cagayan de Oro-Misamis Oriental, 4-0, late Tuesday, but constant rains wiped out the scheduled games yesterday in the PFF-SuperFerry National Women's Football Championship at the Marikina Sports Center in Marikina City.

The Cebuanas' victory was their first in three matches, but they will have to win their last match and pray that either title favorite National Capital Region or Negros Oriental doesn't win another game in Group B to reach the Final Four of the 10-team tournament for women 19 years and older.

The weeklong event is co-organized by the Philippine Football Federation and Marikina City Football Association and backed by Mayor Marides C. Fernando, who is also the MCFA chair, and the city government.

Cebu was actually slated to face Negros Oriental, which is unbeaten in two games, in the last match on yesterday's schedule in the tourney supported by adidas, Red Ribbon Bakeshop, Petron, New Pagcor, Unicef and Aboitiz Express.

Who won in Athens?

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

DID terrorists spare the Athens Olympics? Or were Greece's security forces simply better than the brains of 9/11?

I am almost prepared to congratulate Bin Laden and his ilk.

Terrorists are sports buffs?

Terrorists idolize Pheidippides?

Terrorists adore ancient Athens?

Terrorists respect Greek mythology?

Terrorists bow to Zeus, Mt. Olympus if not Olympism?

But wait, before we get carried away, has it ever occurred to you that Greece licked the Olympiad's biggest concern—security—so well the Greeks should now be declared the toast of the world, the real global policemen, much better than America's so-called elite forces deployed in Iraq?

Omigosh, I feel very much relieved seeing the Olympic Flame finally getting extinguished by that gentle blow from an angelic girl on Aug. 29 to mark the closing of the 28th modern Olympics in Athens.

Ah, what a relief.

After 9/11 in 2001 that killed close to 5,000 people in New York and Washington D.C., almost everybody thinks that from that day on, any big event, the Olympiad included, is a target of mayhem. Thank God nothing untoward happened in Athens from Aug. 13 to Aug. 29.

Oh, there was one incident, though. Not at all security-related. It was, to put it mildly, an incident as laughable as GMA scolding men prone to "beso-beso."

It was this: Vanderlei Lima, the Brazilian leading the marathon on Aug. 29, had himself wrestled down by a spectator five kilometers to the finish line. Lima finished third. In their shame, organizers handed the grief-stricken Lima a special award deemed equal in prestige to the gold medal.

In golf, we call such a similar thing happening to a golfer, like losing his ball to a spectator, as "rub of the green."

Can we call Lima's experience as "rub of the road"?

Anyway, levity aside, the culprit was a defrocked priest, who might have mistaken Lima as a pagan out to flee The Inquisition. His name was Cornelius Horan, a 57-year-old Irish. Horan must have been the reincarnation of Theodosius I, the Roman Emperor who banned the ancient Olympiad after declaring it a pagan rite?

If only to state the obvious, the Greeks, in ensuring a terror-free Olympics, did take security measures with the seriousness of FBI/CIA forces securing George W. Bush each time he stepped out of the White House. The budget for security alone was an unprecedented $1.2 billion. So massive was the security blanket thrown into the Olympic Village that every athlete from a total of nearly 20,000 competitors from 202 nations had 15 security forces assigned to him/her incognito.

With not a single terrorist act recorded as marring the Olympiad, is it safe to say that Greece, which spent nearly $7 billion to host the most expensive ever Olympiad since 1896, scored a resounding victory over terrorism?

In a manner of speaking, yes. No amount of debate can detract from the fact that not a single competitor—several athletes had died in a terrorist attack of the Olympic Village in the 1972 Munich Games—got hurt as a direct result of a terrorist assault in Athens while the Olympiad was on.

But then again, the question: Did terrorists spare Athens?

If you ask me, I couldn't care less. It's enough that we just had an Olympiad free from terrorists' grip. If only for that alone, I can live with the thought—sorry as it will always be—that we wound up empty-handed. Again.

Better sorry than not safe.

***

FASTBREAK. With Sen. Recto and almost all the representatives of Batangas throwing their support behind Bibong Mendoza, expect Bibong, the son of my Primo Gary of Lipa City, to become the new president of the Philippine Councilors League (Batangas Chapter) after today's 1 p.m. election. Now serving his third term with distinction as Lipa City councilor, Bibong is a true-blue sportsman.

US OPEN

Sharapova advances

NEW YORK—Maria Sharapova, one game from becoming the first reigning Wimbledon women's champion to lose in the first round of the US Open, claimed 12 of the last 14 points to defeat Laura Granville, 6-3, 5-7, 7-5, Tuesday night.

"My game went off for a while. I went to La-La Land," the 17-year-old Siberian-turned-Floridian said, "but I came back to Earth."

She wasn't the only top player pushed to the limit on Day 2 at Flushing Meadows: 2000 Open winner Marat Safin of Russia and 11th-seed German Rainer Schuettler lost, while 2003 runner-up Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain and Tim Henman of Britain both needed five sets to advance.

The 2003 champion Andy Roddick broke the tournament record with a 152 mph serve in a 6-0, 6-2, 6-2 victory over 17-year-old Scoville Jenkins.

Venus Williams was broken while serving for the match but eventually pulled out a 6-3, 7-6 (3) win over 64th-ranked Petra Mandula of Hungary.

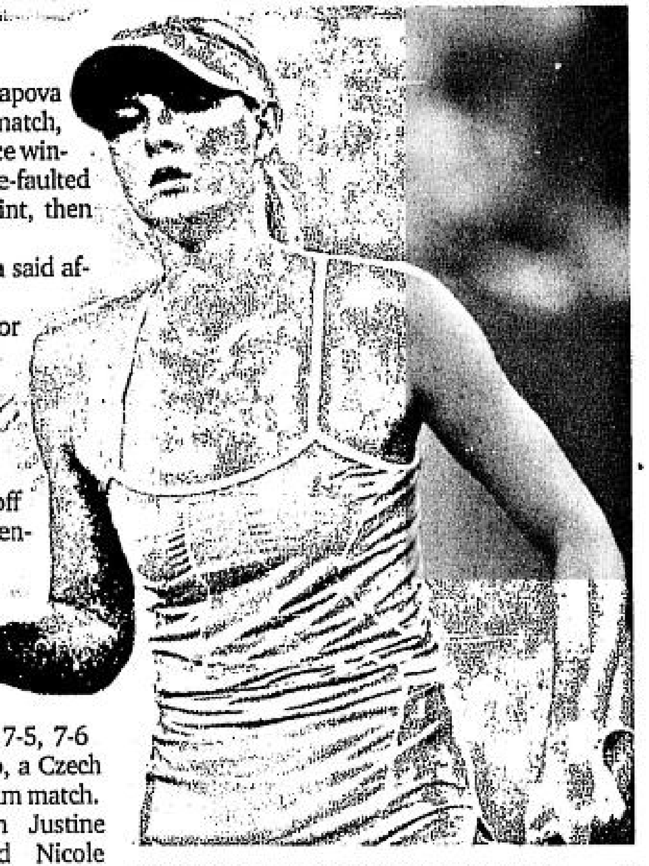
After cruising through the first set against 68th-ranked Granville of Chicago before a subdued crowd, Sharapova was suddenly in trouble late in the second. Down 6-5, Sharapova faced her first break point of the match, which she saved with a 101 mph service winner on a second serve. But she double-faulted to grant Granville another break point, then slapped a forehand into the net.

"It's all about the spirit," Sharapova said after her 2-hour, 9-minute adventure.

Safin might want to take a note or two. Late in his 7-6 (5), 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 loss to 59th-ranked Tomas Enqvist, Safin grabbed his racket with both hands, leaned forward, and cracked it to the court three times.

Battling a bad back that kept him off the practice courts for three days, Henman withstood 6-foot-10 Ivo Karlovic's 39 aces and toughed it out for more than 3½ hours in a 7-6 (3), 6-7 (7), 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 victory. Ferrero had an even longer day, playing 4½ hours to cobble together a 4-6, 7-5, 7-6 (6), 6-7 (4), 6-3 win over Tomas Zib, a Czech qualifier who's never won a Grand Slam match.

Defending US Open champion Justine Henin-Hardenne beat 15-year-old Nicole Vaidisova, 6-1, 6-4. *AP*



MARIA Sharapova avoids an early exit. AP

Butuan launches own football fiesta

SOUTHWEST FC beat Ong Yiu Elementary, 6-3, while Sunbeam FC downed Agusan National High, 3-0, as the Butuan-Agusan Norte Football Association (BANFA) under-14 tournament, a version of the Red Ribbon Football Fiesta, kicked off recently at the Villa Karanga Elementary School.

Other games saw Libertad National High draw Ong Yiu Barangay, 1-1, while Villa Karanga Elementary salvaged a scoreless draw with Calot Football Club.

The event sanctioned by the Philippine Football Federation kicked off amid an early downpour at the newly-groomed pitch.

The field took the appearance of the feast with the presence of ice cream, ice candy and fruit vendors, tables of snacks and sari-sari stores.

During the opening rites, BANFA president Tito Clemente presented the first two football scholars—Mark Anthony O. Caballes and John Francis F. Samson—from the Red Ribbon Bakeshop tournament.

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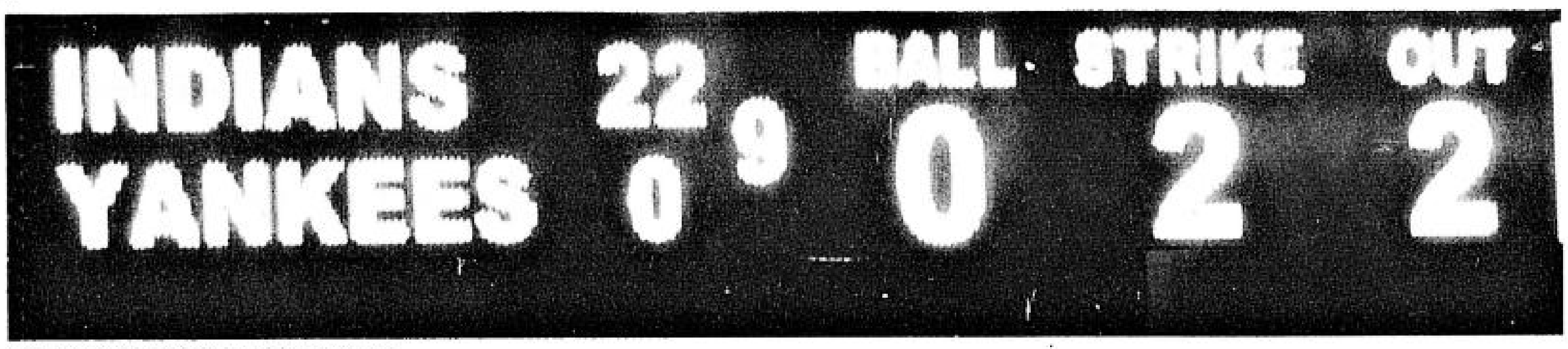


THE SCOREBOARD told everyone at Yankee Stadium the ugly truth. AP

Indians embarrass Yankees

NEW YORK—The New York Yankees, the most storied sports franchise in US sport who boasts a payroll of more than $180 million, lost 22-0 to the Cleveland Indians here Tuesday.

It was the largest defeat in the 100-plus year history of the Yankees, who just two weeks ago led their archrivals, the Boston Red Sox, by more than 10 games in the American League East Division. The lead has now dwindled to just 3.5 games.

Boston and New York will meet in two three-game series before the regular season ends.

It was the worst defeat a Yankees team has suffered since losing 24-6 to the Indians in 1928.

The Indians short stop Omar Vizquel had six hits to tie the American League record for a nine-inning game.

Another record for the Yankees and principal owner George Steinbrenner, who has a reputation of disliking defeat, is that it equaled the largest shutout win set by the Pittsburgh Pirates against the Chicago Cubs 29 years ago.

Steinbrenner watched the game with 51,777 fans, who often booed their beloved players, but he did not make any comments to the media. *AFP*

RP chessers clinch rapid crown in KL

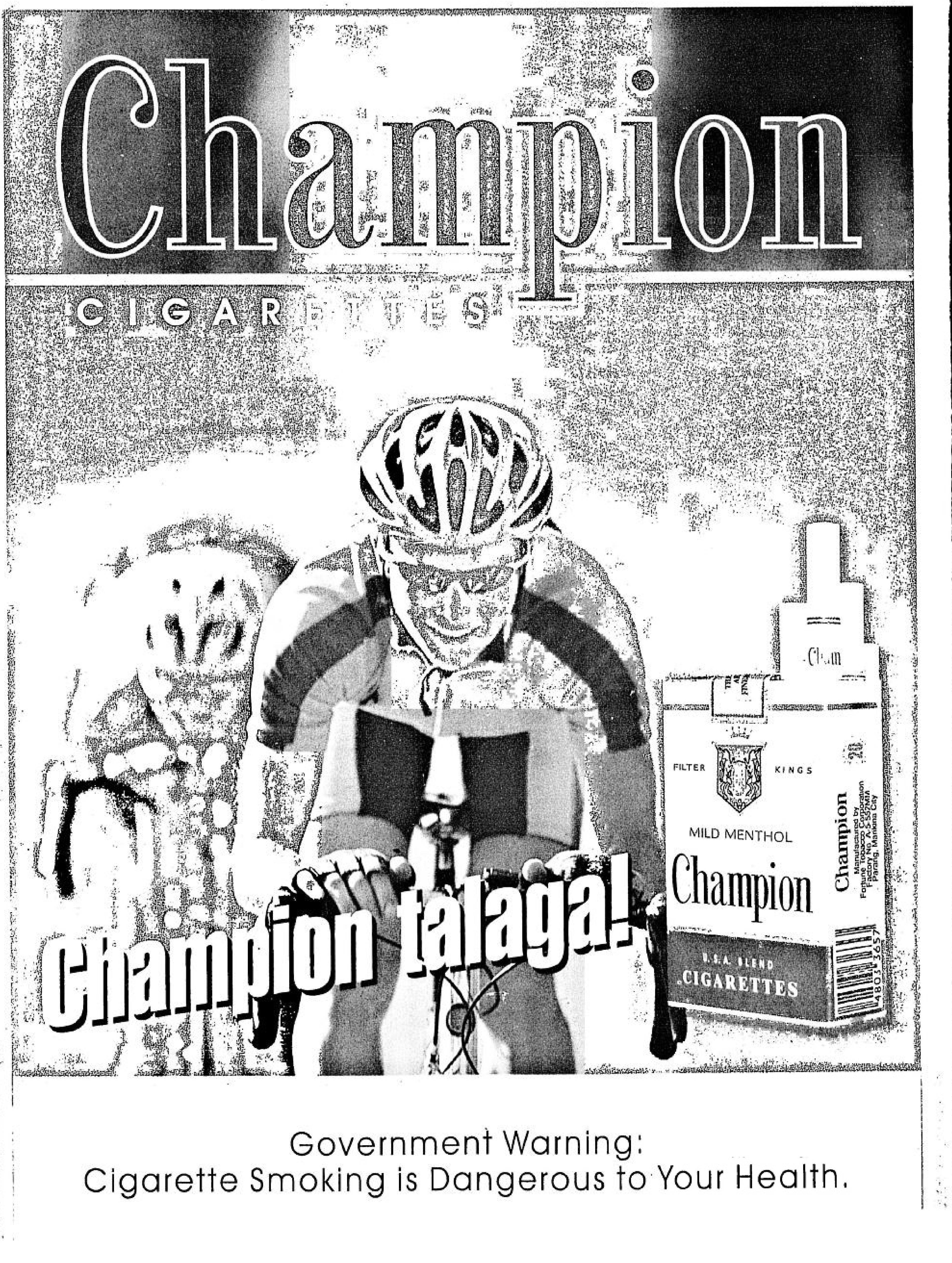
KUALA LUMPUR—The Philippines went unbeaten in the last four rounds to clinch the team rapid title in the First Dato Tan International Open chess tournament Tuesday night.

The Filipinos marked that roll with a trio of 2.5-1.5 wins over fancied rivals Vietnam, Mid-Valley A of China and Gila Chess Club of Uzbekistan in the sixth, seventh and ninth rounds, respectively, boosting their tally to 25.5 points to best 49 other squads and bag the top pot of $3,000.

Knightmare of Singapore, anchored by GM Bong Villamayor, and Vietnam were tied for second and third place with 24.5 points while Gila Chess Club and Mid-Valley A of China was fourth with 22 points.

The nationals, composed of Grandmasters Joey Antonio, Nelson Mariano II, Fide Master Oliver Dimakiling and unrated player David Apelo, earlier bagged the team standard crown in the outing funded by the First Gentleman's Foundation and the Philippines Sports Commission.

"This was a tough tournament but we are proud and grateful that we will be bringing home honors for our country," team captain Antonio said.



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10	ANACONDAS
11	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
12	COLLATERAL

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6	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
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8	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
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11	I, ROBOT
12	THE VILLAGE

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5	THE NOTEBOOK
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10	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
11	SUPER SIZE ME
12	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU

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2	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
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5	THE NOTEBOOK
6	LAWS OF ATTRACTION
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8	ANACONDAS

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3	ANACONDAS
4	LAWS OF ATTRACTION
5	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
6	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
7	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
8	THUNDERBIRDS
9	THE NOTEBOOK
10	THE VILLAGE

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2	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
3	THE NOTEBOOK
4	PRINCESS DIARIES 2

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1	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
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4	ANACONDAS

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5	STEPFORD WIVES
6	PRINCESS DIARIES 2

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2	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
3	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
4	ANACONDAS

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2	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
3	ANACONDAS
4	THE NOTEBOOK
5	THUNDERBIRDS
6	COLLATERAL
7	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
8	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
9	LAWS OF ATTRACTION
10	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2

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2	THE NOTEBOOK
3	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
4	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

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2	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
3	ANACONDAS
4	THE NOTEBOOK

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1	LAWS OF ATTRACTION
2	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
3	ANACONDAS
4	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
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7	THUNDERBIRDS
8	ANACONDAS

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2	STEPFORD WIVES
3	GARFIELD
4	THE VILLAGE

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MF/2:05/4:15/10:30
LFS/11:00 LMF/
12:35 END

2
THE NOTEBOOK
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MF/2:30/5:00/
10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/
1:30 END

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CTC MOV EASTWOOD
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and 225 for Smart

For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

1	PRINCESS DIARIES 2	12:00, 2:30, 5:00 7:30, 10:20	GP
2	CONNIE AND CARLA	11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20 8:40, 11:00	PG 13
3	ANACONDAS	11:35, 1:50, 4:05 6:20, 8:35, 11:00	PG-13
4	THE NOTEBOOK	12:05, 2:35, 5:05 7:35, 10:05	PG 13

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

LAWS OF ATTRACTION	PG13	11:50,1:50,3:50,5:50,7:50,9:50
PRINCESS DIARIES 2	GP	12:00,2:25,4:50,7:15,9:40
THE NOTEBOOK	PG-13	1:10,4:10,7:10,10:10
CONNIE AND CARLA	PG13	12:00,2:00,4:00,6:00,8:00,10:00
SUPER SIZE ME	GP	1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55,10:05
ANACONDAS	PG13	1:20,3:35,5:50,8:05,10:20

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171

1 (DOLBY)	PRINCESS DIARIES 2	GP
2 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS	PG - 13
3 (DOLBY)	THE STEPFORD WIVES	PG-13
4 (DOLBY)	THE NOTEBOOK	PG-13

PREMIERE

(DOLBY)	SUPER SIZE ME	GP

SUPER CINERAMA
isetann
CINERAMA COMPLEX RECTO
tel 733.4238

1. (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
2.	THE NOTEBOOK
3.	SUGAT
4.	ALIEN VS, PREDATO
5.	HAMOG

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	RESERVE
2	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3	SUGAT
4 (SDDS)	HAMOG
5	THUNDERBIRDS
6 (DOLBY)	ALIEN VS, PREDATO
7 (DTS)	ANACONDAS
8	RESERVE
9	RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 , 833.3274

1	HAMOG
2	ANACONDAS
3	ALIEN VS, PREDATOR

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	HAMOG
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	ANACONDAS
5	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	SUGAT
2	HAMOG
3	THE NOTEBOOK
4	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
5 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
6	ALIEN VS, PREDATOR

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007

1 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
2	SUGAT

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	ANACONDAS
2 (SDDS)	PRINCESS DIARIES-2
3 (DTS)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 GOLD (DTS)	CONNIE & CARLA
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	ANACONDAS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	PRINCESS DIARIES-2
8 [illegible]	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
9 [illegible]	THE NOTEBOOK
10 [illegible]	LAWS OF ATTRACTION

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
ALIMALL CINEPLEX
Tel. 911-3101 loc. 8242 / 8281 / 8397

3 (Dolby)	ANACONDAS
4 (SDDS)	JANDARA
5 (DTS)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
6 (Dolby)	THE NOTEBOOK
7 (Dolby)	PRINCESS DIARIES 2

MARKETI MALL Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	ANACONDAS
2	NOTEBOOK
3	HAMOG
4	

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	SOON TO OPEN
2	SOON TO OPEN
3 (DTS EX)	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121

1	PRINCESS DIARIES-2
2	ANACONDAS
3 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
4 (DTS)	ALONG CAME POLLY

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489

1	CINDERELLA STORY
2	THE VILLAGE
3 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL
4 (DTS)	ALIENT VS PREDATOR

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	GARFIELD
2	THE VILLAGE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	PRINCESS DIARIES-2
2 (DOLBY)	CONNIE & CARLA
3 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
4 (DOLBY)	THE NOTEBOOK

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926

1	HAMOG
2	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
3 (DTS)	ANACONDAS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	
2 (DTS)	PRINCESS DIARIES-2
3 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
4	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	PRINCESS DIARIES-2
2 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
3 (DTS)	ALIEN VS, PREDATOR
4	DEAD PEOPLE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
2	THE CINDERELLA STORY
3 (DOLBY)	THE VILLAGE

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	ELLA ENCHANTED
2	WEREWOLF (GINGER SNAP-2)
3 (DOLBY)	DEAD PEOPLE
4 (DTS)	THE CINDERELLA STORY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 7953320

1	ANACONDAS
2	PRINCESS DIARIES-2
3 (DOLBY)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	WILD BUTTERFLY
2	HAMOG
3	COLLATERAL
4 (DTS)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	ANACONDAS
2	HAMOG
3 (DTS)	ALIEN VS, PREDATOR
4	TEEN PLAY
5	PRINCESS DIARIES-2

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283

1	HAMOG
2	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
3 (DTS)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 (DOLBY)	DEAD PEOPLE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	DEATH CURSE
2	THUNDERBIRD
3	KARELASYON
4	ALIEN VS PREDATOR

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	ANACONDAS
2	SUGAT

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Dungca interview an 'Eye to Eye exclusive'

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

MY BROTHER **Ricky**, sister **Clara** and I went on a sentimental journey as we planned the first anniversary of our dear mom's appointment with the Lord (Sept. 26).

We browsed through countless albums and watched stacks of videos of her TV talk shows. When the three of us are together, it always feels like our mom is right in our midst. Thoughts of her seem so real that we forget that she's not physically around anymore.

While watching the tapes, we suddenly wondered if the controversial "Eye to Eye" tape of our mom's interview with **Vivialyn Dungca** could be lying around somewhere. It would take months to search through the tons and tons of tapes of all her shows.

It's that Dungca interview that sparked the controversy between GMA-7 and ABS-CBN 2 regarding copyright infringement. GMA-7 claimed that ABS-CBN 2's "TV Patrol" used the footage of my mom's interview with Dungca without asking GMA's permission. GMA also insisted that ABS-CBN covered the words "Eye to Eye Exclusive" with a red bar when they aired the video.

ABS-CBN argued that GMA network had no right to enforce the copyright on the video footage since the network is not the owner of the copyright. That's all moot and academic now because the Court of Appeals has upheld the Quezon City Trial Court's decision in favor of GMA-7. It's just so uncanny that the CA's ruling was granted Aug. 6, 2004—my mom's birthday.

Ricky, Clara and I can't help but smile thinking that even until now our mom continues to make an impact. That Dungca footage issue was also brought up by GMA-7 in its ongoing battle against ABS-CBN 2 regarding the alleged stealing of the footage of the arrival of terrorist kidnapping victim Angelo de la Cruz.

Mom remains an icon even after life.

I don't intend to antagonize either GMA-7 or ABS-CBN 2 because my mom spent the best years of her life as a broadcaster on Channel 7 and she also was a "*kapamilya*" when she worked for ABS-CBN's radio station dzMM. Neither would I want to get into the nitty-gritty of the nature of my mom's "Eye to Eye" contract with GMA-7. It's just strange watching the two giant networks fight over a tape which is an "Eye to Eye exclusive" to begin with.

If my mom were alive, I know she would just let things slide and say, "*Hayaan mo na sila.*"

What saddens Ricky, Clara and I is that they didn't even bother to mention our mom's name in the news reports about the Dungca

DUNGCA/ A22

CBCP sets second Catholic TV Advocacy seminar Sept. 17-18

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

LAST June, the Office on Women of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines set a very successful seminar on "Catholic Advocacy for Television in the Philippines" at the Pope Pius Center.

The pioneering seminar effectively sought to understand television in all its aspects as it is currently being practiced in the Philippines, with the view in mind of objectively and proficiently evaluating the effect of TV programs, particularly on young viewers.

It then went on to launch a new Catholic initiative for regular TV assessment and review, for the guidance of parents, educators, clergy, lay leaders and students who are concerned about what children and teenagers watch, and how it affects them for good or for bad.

When we're asked to help facilitate the June seminar, we readily agreed, because we sensed that there was a growing need for viewers to understand the TV medium, so they could have a stronger say on the programs their children were being exposed to.

During the seminar, we were heartened to see the participants taking the discussion and workshops to heart, and eager to participate in the Catholic advocacy that the CBCP envisioned.

The June seminar's success has prompted requests for another workshop, so the CBCP's Office on Women, led by Dr. **Zenaida V. Rotea**, once again is planning to hold another seminar on "Catholic Advocacy for Television in the Philippines" on Sept. 17 and 18, Friday and Saturday, this time at the Office on Women at the CBCP compound, 170 Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, again with us facilitating. Call 527-1925 and 527-8031 for details.

Topics to be tackled include the impact of mass media, the local context of TV production today, TV language and how it affects viewers' sensibilities, analysis and evaluation of programs, television's effect on young viewers, and the reactive and proactive dimensions of the CBCP's new Catholic advocacy for television. Limited 40 slots are open so call now.

CBCP/A22

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX
3 Dolby ANACONDAS 12:10 pm 2:25 pm 4:40 pm 6:55 pm 9:10 pm
4 SDDS JANDARA 11:35 am 1:55 pm 4:15 pm 6:35 pm 8:55 pm
5 dts ALIEN vs PREDATOR 12:10 pm 2:25 pm 4:40 pm 6:55 pm 9:10 pm
6 Dolby THE NOTEBOOK 11:00 am 1:30 pm 4:00 pm 6:30 pm 9:00 pm
7 Dolby PRINCESS DIARIES 2 1:25 pm 3:55 pm 6:25 pm 8:55 pm
ARANETA COLISEUM
Sep 11 ATENEO vs FEU
Sep 12 UAAP: CHEERING COMPETITION
Sep 15 JOHN MAXWELL in Manila
Sep 17 SOUTH BORDER CONCERT
Sep 18 WRR ANNIVERSARY CONCERT
Sep 19 UAAP SEMIFINAL GAMES
Sep 23 UAAP CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS
Dec 25 DISNEY ON ICE : Princess Classics
For tickets, call TicketNet at 911-5555

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 PRINCESS DIARIES 2 FS. 12:25PM, 3:10PM, 5:55PM, LMF: 8:40PM MTRCB Rating : GP
2 ANACONDAS FS. 12:50PM, 3:05PM, 5:20PM, 7:35PM, LMF: 9:50PM MTRCB Rating : PG-13
3 THE STEPFORD WIVES FS: 11:30AM, 1:30PM, 3:30PM, 5:30PM, 7:30PM, LMF. 9:30PM MTRCB Rating : PG-13
4 THE NOTEBOOK FS: 12:30PM, 3:15PM, 6:00PM, LMF: 8:45PM MTRCB Rating : PG-13
PREMIERE THEATRE SUPER SIZE ME FS: 11:55AM, 2:10PM, 4:25PM, 6:40PM, LMF: 8:55PM MTRCB Rating : GP
Shangri-La Plaza

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CINEMA 1 PRINCESS DIARIES - 2 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00 GP
CINEMA 2 ANACONDAS 10:50, 1:05, 3:20, 5:35, 7:50, 10:10 PG13
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September 4 2004 MY SHEREE AMOR 9PM
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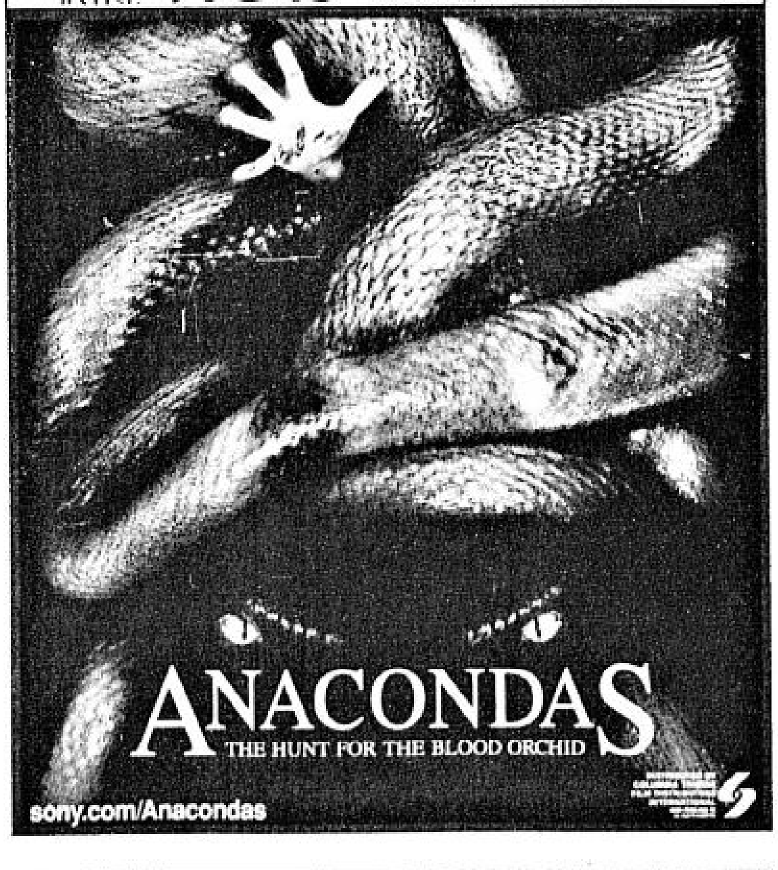
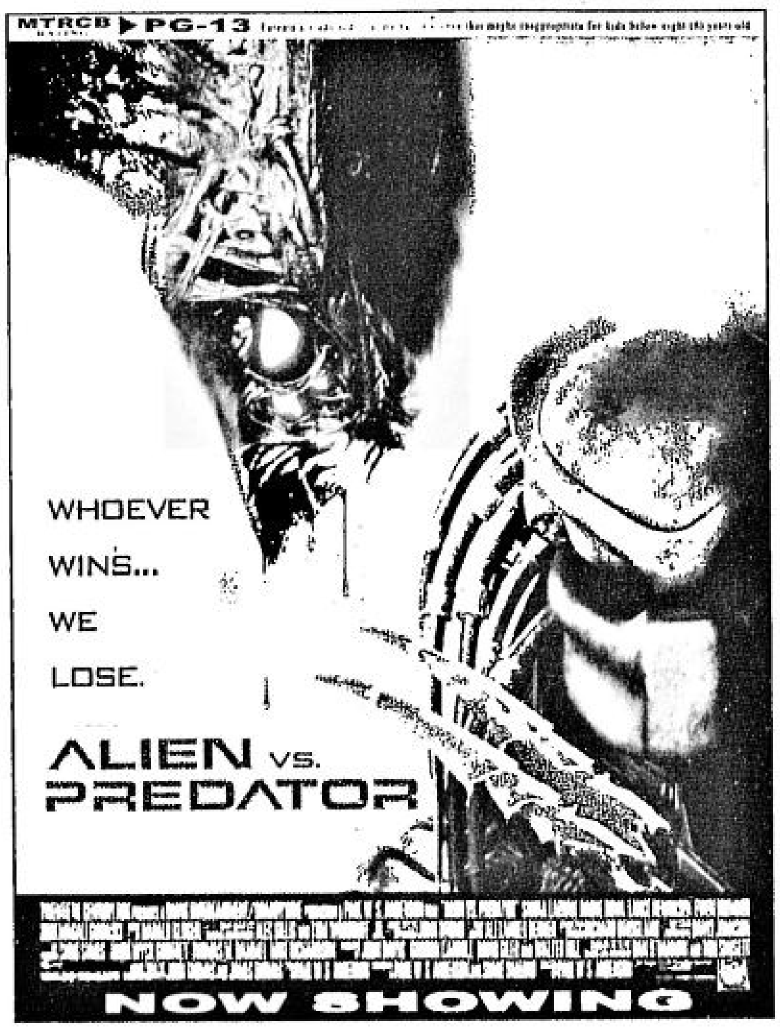
THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF [illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ALYZS BOMBA QUEEN / DI MAPIGIL NA INIT
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	HAMOG
B	CLOSED
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA 1, 2, 3 & 4	CLOSED FOR SPECIAL EVENT ANACONDAS/PRINCESS DIARIES 2/STEPFORD WIVES
PREMIERE THEATRE	THE NOTEBOOK
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
CINEMA-2	HAMOG
CINEMA-3	THE VILLAGE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ANACONDAS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SUGAT (RE-ISSUE)
CINEMA-6	BANGKOK HAUNTED 2
CINEMA-7	LAWS OF ATTRACTION
CINEMA-8	THUNDERBIRDS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	ANACONDAS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ANACONDAS
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	PRINCESS DIARIES 2
CINEMA-12	THE NOTEBOOK
CINEMA-14	JANDARA
CINEMA-15	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
CINEMA-1	NOW THAT I HAVE YOU
CINEMA-2	GARFIELD
CINEMA-4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	[illegible]

Warning: Hungry 50-Foot Snakes on the Loose!
2ND ANACONDAS ATTACK DAY!
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13



MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13



MTRCB RATING ▶ R-18 STRICTLY FOR ADULTS ONLY
3RD HIT WEEK EXCLUSIVELY
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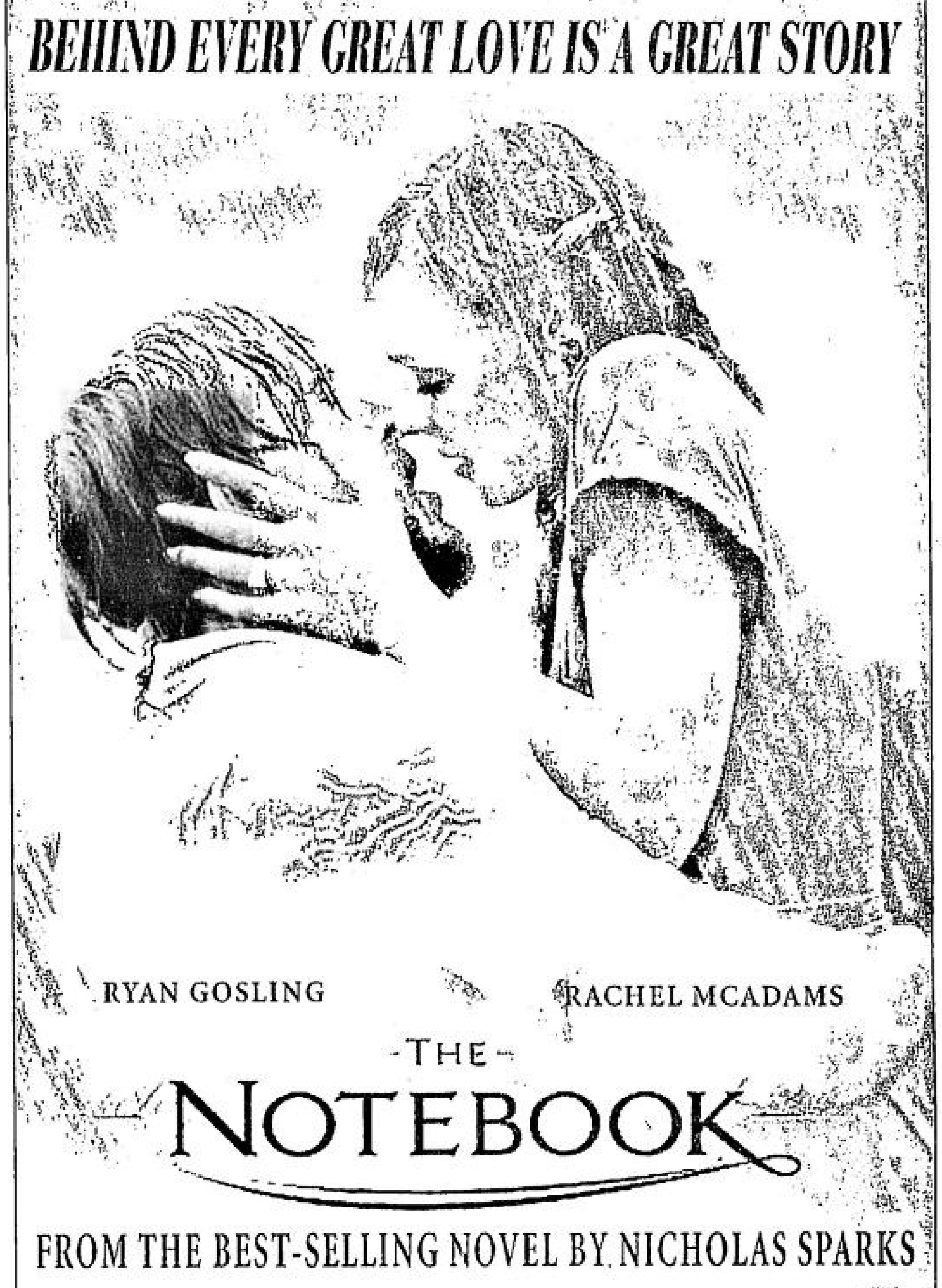
" A large proportion of the audience may be drawn to "JAN DARA" for the sex on-screen, and there is certainly plenty of that, in all possible variations. But they will also find themselves rewarded by a fascinating character study, an examination of society in flux, and a reflection on the vagaries of fate.
Rina Jimenez David - Phil. Daily Inquirer, Aug. 31,2004

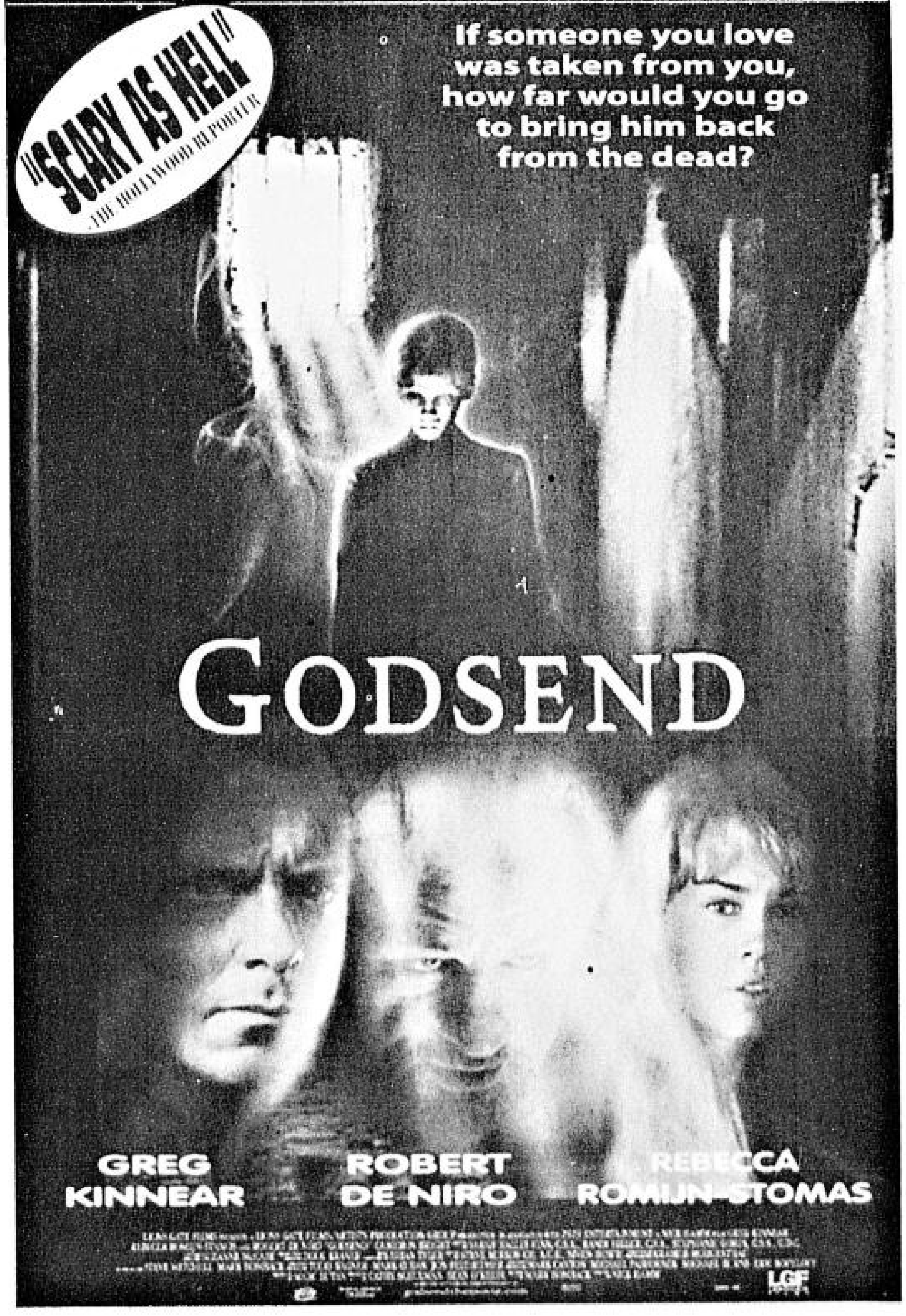
ASIA'S EROTIC PHENOMENON!
Jandara
Released through Solar Entertainment Corporation

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP



BEHIND EVERY GREAT LOVE IS A GREAT STORY
RYAN GOSLING
RACHEL MCADAMS
THE NOTEBOOK
FROM THE BEST-SELLING NOVEL BY NICHOLAS SPARKS

OPENS SEPTEMBER 8
BAWAL MANUOD ANG MGA MAHIHINA ANG SIKMURA
PASISIGAWIN KA MULA SIMULA HANGGANG WAKAS.



"SCARY AS HELL"
If someone you love was taken from you, how far would you go to bring him back from the dead?
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GREG KINNEAR
ROBERT DE NIRO
REBECCA ROMIJN-STAMOS
LGF

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NOW SHOWING

GALLERIA 632-9115 to 16
CINEMA 1 THX ANACONDAS 12:10, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
2 THE NOTEBOOK 12:30, 3:40, 6:50, 10:00
3 CONNIE AND CARLA 10.20, 12:40, 3:00, 5.20, 7:40, 10:00
4 SUPER SIZE ME 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
5 ANACONDAS 10:20, 12:40, 3.00, 5:20, 7.40, 10:00
6 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
7 JANDARA 12:40, 3.00, 5.20, 7:40, 10:00
8 LAWS OF ATTRACTION 12.00, 2:00, 4.00, 6:00, 8.00, 10.00
9 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 12.40, 3:00, 5 20, 7 40, 10:00
10 THE VILLAGE 12:40, 3 00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P150 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 ANACONDAS 10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:40
2 SUPER SIZE ME 10:10, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6.00, 8:00, 9:50
3 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2 11.30, 2.00, 4.30, 7.00, 9:40
4 THE NOTEBOOK 10:10, 12.50, 3:30, 6:10, 8.15, 10:00
5 CONNIE AND CARLA 10:20, 12:05, 2:00, 3:55, 5:50, 7:45, 9:40
6 LAWS OF ATTRACTION 11:50, 1:50, 3.50, 5:50, 7:50, 9:50
7 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 / 682-8280
1 LAWS OF ATTRACTION 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
2 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
3 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2 10.05, 12:20, 2 40, 5:00, 7.20, 9:40
4 ANACONDAS 12:20, 2.45, 5.10, 7 35, 10:00
5 ANACONDAS 10:25, 12.50, 3.15, 5:40, 8 05, 10:30
6 THE VILLAGE 10:50, 12.50, 2:50, 4:50, 6.50, 9:00
THE NOTEBOOK 12:30, 3.10, 5.50, 9.00
8 JANDARA 10:25, 12.50, 3.15, 5:40, 8.05, 10:30

NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW 935-3229 / 31
1 ANACONDAS 11:20, 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00
2 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2 11:00, 1:25, 3:50, 6:15, 8:40
3 THE STEPFORD WIVES 11:00, 12:55, 2:50, 4:45, 6:40, 8:35
4 NOW THAT I HAVE YOU 11.30, 1:45, 4 00, 6 15, 8:30
5 ANACONDAS 10:30, 12:35, 2:40, 4:45, 6:50, 8:55
6 LAWS OF ATTRACTION 11 00, 12.55, 2:50, 4:45, 6:40, 8:35
7 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR 10:15, 12 45, 3:15, 5:45, 8:30
8 THE VILLAGE 11:30, 1:45, 4:00, 6:15, 8:30

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985/2575
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2
3 ANACONDAS
4 DECOYS

CAINTA 240-4661
1 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2
2 JANDARA
3 ANACONDAS
4 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

STA. ROSA (049)837-0907
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2
3 HAMOG
4 DEAD PEOPLE
5 ANACONDAS

LIPA 757-3664 / 312-5870
1 THUNDERBIRDS
2 DEATH CURSE
3 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
4 KARELASYON
5 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

DASMARIÑAS 852-2125 / 416-4332
1 THE PRINCESS DIARIES 2
2 HAMOG
3 ANACONDAS
4 A CINDERELLA STORY
5 THE STEPFORD WIVES

STARMILLS 875-1927 / 961-5270
1 PRINCESS DIARIES 2
2 HAMOG
3 THE STEPFORD WIVES
4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
5 ANACONDAS
6 ANACONDAS

IMUS 471-8188 / 875-5858
1 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
2 HAMOG
3 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 ANACONDAS
5 ANACONDAS
6 THUNDERBIRDS

BACOLOD 441-0458/59
1. A CINDERELLA STORY
2 THE VILLAGE
3 THE PRINCE AND ME
4 GARFIELD
5 SYLVIA
6 BANGKOK HAUNTED 2

ILOILO 336-8070/78
1 A CINDERELLA STORY
2 SYLVIA
3 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR
4 THE VILLAGE
5 MAKAMUNDO
6 THUNDERBIRDS

KAYA MO BA 'TO?
SUPER SIZE ME

at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

SUPER SIZE ME
A FILM OF EPIC PORTIONS

watch exclusively at Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA and ERMITA
MTRCB Rating: G
MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

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AT THE CENTER

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
BEST OF THE BEST SAMSUNG TAEKWONDO CHAMPIONSHIP September 1 to 5, 2004	NINA LIVE! September 5, 6:00pm	CEBU UNITING FOR SUSTAINABLE WATER PROGRAM September 4, 8:30am to 12noon

ENTERTAINMENT LIVE!

GREENBELT 2	GREENBELT 3
GREENBELT 2: MUSIC STYLES featuring The Real Groove September 2, 7:00 to 10:00pm	SAVOUR NATURE EXHIBIT BY WWF PHILIPPINES Greenbelt 3 Lobby, September 1 to 14

OnStage Rep's Globe Theater presents PINOCCHIO
August 7 to December 12

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AYALA CINEMAS

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THX 1 ANACONDAS	1 CONNIE & CARLA	1 CONNIE & CARLA 5 ALIEN VS. PREDATOR	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 THE NOTEBOOK 2 50, 5 40, 8 30, 11 20	1 ANACONDAS
2 THE NOTEBOOK	2 ANACONDAS	2 PRINCESS DIARIES 2 6 ANACONDAS	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 ANACONDAS 2 40, 4 45, 6 50, 8 55, 11 00	2 A CINDERELLA STORY
3 CONNIE & CARLA	3 THE NOTEBOOK	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 THE NOTEBOOK 11 10, 2 00, 4 50, 7 40, 10 30 7 LAWS OF ATTRACTION	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 LAWS OF ATTRACTION 1 30, 3 30, 5 30, 7 30, 9 30, 11 30	3 THE STEPFORD WIVES
4 LAWS OF ATTRACTION		4 THE STEPFORD WIVES	GUARANTEED SEATS 4 PRINCESS DIARIES 2 1 40, 4 00, 6 20, 8 40, 11 00	4 ETERNAL SUNSHINE
5 PRINCESS DIARIES 2	4 PRINCESS DIARIES 2		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 CONNIE & CARLA 2 55, 5 00, 7 05, 9 10, 11 15	5 THE VILLAGE

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 SUPER SIZE ME
2 ANACONDAS 11:25, 1 30, 3 35, 5 40, 7 45, 9 50

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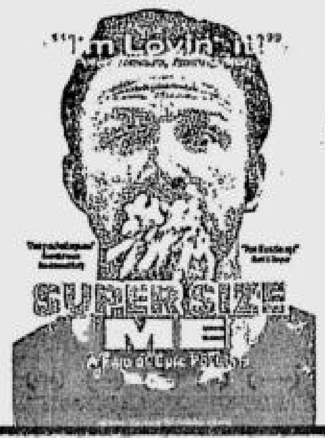

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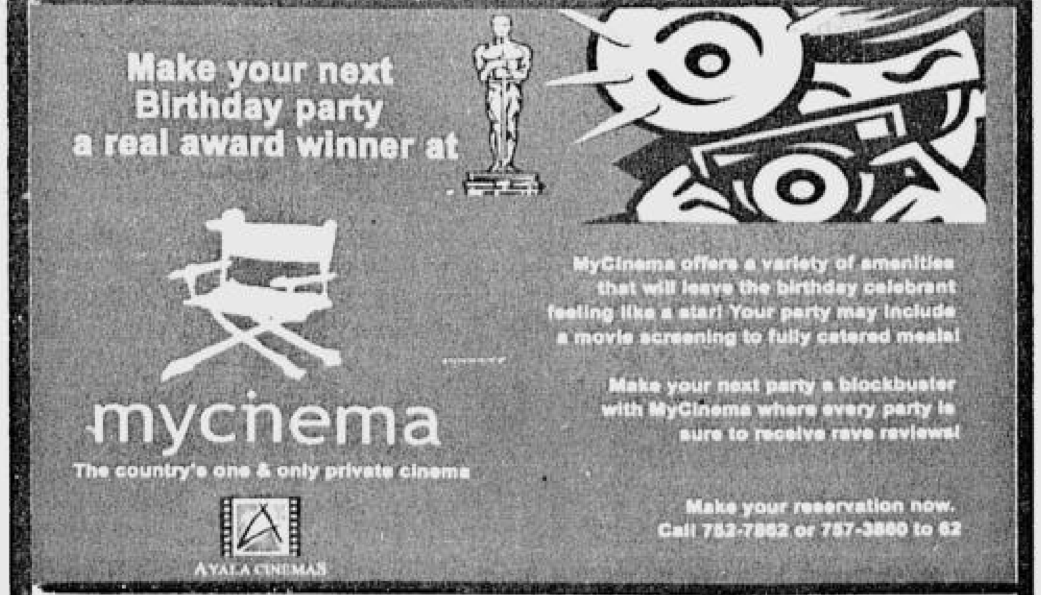
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AYALA MALLS
LoveMall!

CBCP sets...

From page A21

Feedback

FROM **Gerardo B. Reynaldo** of San Miguel, Manila: "We were amused by your article, "Movie viewathon, anyone?" (Aug.7). Despite assertions that going to the movies is an important hobby, or simply a cure for boredom, marathon movie viewing is an underrated skill not everybody acquires easily.

CBCP/ A23

Dungca interview...

From page A20

footage.

Don't worry, Mom, Ricky, Clara and I will take care of your legacy in our own little way.

'Sacrilege'

THE NEW Voice Co. is presenting "Sacrilege."

The play by **Diane Shaffer** deals about women in the priesthood. Sister Grace is a nun who runs a crisis center in New York, raising awareness of and gathering support for the issue of the Church allowing women into the priesthood, and in the process infuriating her old mentor, Cardinal King, who originally inspired her to devote her life to God. She also infuriates the Pope himself.

Woven into Sister Grace's fight to change Church policy is her relationship with a street thug named Ramon, whom she first meets when he pilfers her purse at a park. Grace recognizes Ramon's spirituality, just as Cardinal King recognized hers.

"Sacrilege" stars **Tami Monsod** as Sister Grace, **Leo Rialp** as **Cardinal King** and **Jamie Wilson** as Ramon, with **Michael Williams, Paul Holme and Rito Asilo** as the powers that be of the Church who decide on Sister Grace's fate. Also featured are **Rabbi Gannaban, Jenny Jamora, and Lara de Jesus.**

Direction is by NVC associate artistic director **Rito Asilo**, with light design by **Martin Esteva**, and artistic direction by **Monique Wilson.**

Rossana Abueva is executive producer. The play is presented with special license from Samuel French Inc.

"Sacrilege" runs at the Republic of Malate, Sept. 3-11. For tickets, group and student discounts and show-buying inquiries, call New Voice, 896-6695. Tickets are also available at Ticketworld, 891-9999.

Personal

HAPPY 19th birthday to the adorable girl who changed my world for the better when she came along when I was 19, my daughter **Bianchi.** Love you with all of me!

For feedback, e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

ZETA-JONES

United Airlines sponsors 'Terminal' premiere

"THE TERMINAL," the new film of Academy Award winners Tom Hanks ("Philadelphia," "Forrest Gump") and Catherine Zeta-Jones ("Chicago"), directed by another Academy Award winner, Steven Spielberg, will have a grand premiere tonight at Robinson's Galleria.

The premiere is sponsored by United Airlines in cooperation with United International Pictures and Solar Entertainment Corp.

"The Terminal" is the story of Viktor Navorski, a visitor to New York City from Eastern Europe whose country erupts in a fiery coup while he is flying to America. Stranded at the JFK International Airport with a now-useless passport, he must "improvise" at the terminal's international transit lounge for days and nights until the war at home is over. Hanks plays the stranded passenger, while Zeta-Jones is a United Airlines flight attendant.

During the regular run of "The Terminal" at all SM, Ayala and Robinson's cinemas starting Sept. 8, viewers have a chance to join the raffle promo. One lucky winner in each theater chain will get a round trip ticket to the US from United Airlines or a Hug Boss gift pack.

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When you follow your dream, there's no telling what you'll become.
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CBCP sets second Catholic TV Advocacy...

From page A22

"One has got to have movies in one's system, just as would-be businessmen have to cultivate blue-chip bloodlines. True movie buffs wouldn't really mind getting locked up in,a theater.

"There's no such things as movie-watching fatigue (though anti-Bergman, anti-art house movie fans would probably contest this). In fact, it is an opportunity most welcome to get lost in new worlds, to seek enchantment, to watch the stars.

"Just as we don't accept that a cola drink is simply colored water, or that love is really lust, the flickering light is more than just a figment of the imagination. Therefore, if a viewathon is being planned in the near future, we would gladly participate."

Australian film fest

THE SECOND Australian Film Festival officially opens at 8 p.m. on Sept. 18 at the UP Film Center with the screening of the Berlin film fest winner, Tony Ayres' "Walking on Water." Earlier, at 5 p.m., "Chopper" is scheduled.

Other movies: Sept. 19 at 4 p.m., "The Hard Word." 7 p.m., "Garage Days." Sept. 20 at 4 p.m., "Hildegarde." 7 p.m., "Walking on Water."

Sept. 21 at 4 p.m., "Doing Time for Patsy Kline." 7 p.m., "The Tracker." Sept. 22 at 4 p.m., "The Hard Word." 7 p.m., "Australian Rules."

Sept. 23 at 4 p.m., "Black and White." 7 p.m., "Better Than Sex." Call 925-0286.

'Eye on India'

FROM Sept. 6 to 10, CNN screens its unique programming initiative, "Eye on India." The special feature will focus on India's rapidly changing role in the global political and business environment.

The India theme will include live broadcasts and in-depth features which go beyond the headlines.

As the Indian economy continues to grow, CNN will look at the issues at the center of "outsourcing," as more businesses seek to benefit from India's cheap labor costs, especially in the call center market.

This subject is also the theme of a special documentary by award-winning filmmaker Thomas Friedman, which will air on CNN as part of "Eye on India."

THE NOTEBOOK
$ 77M US BOXOFFICE
NEW LINE CINEMA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL FILM AFTER LOTR.
RYAN GOSLING AS NOAH CALHOUN
RACHEL MCADAMS AS ALLIE HAMILTON
JAMES MARSDEN AS LON

New Line Cinema's **'The Notebook'** has grossed a staggering **$ 77m** in the US boxoffice todate. It is expected to hit the magic **$100m** mark by end of this year. Good word-of-mouth contributed to the huge success.The poor boy/rich girl romantic tearjerker is the most profitable production this year for New Line Cinema after **The Lord Of The Rings**. **The Notebook** is based on **Nicolas Sparks** best selling book. Sparks also wrote **' Walk To Remember'** which wasalso made into hit movie starring Mandy Moore.

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9:30pm CINEMA 1
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(SWEDEN)
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CINE EUROPA 7: THE BIGGER PICTURE
BLACK METEOR
(THE NETHERLANDS)
by Guido Pieters
This is a film that tells of how the arrival of the South African player Steve Mokone turned the sleepy town of Almelo on its head.
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE
(AUSTRIA)
by Hu Mei
In the early 30's Fanny went to China to marry a man she barely knew. This is the story of their courtship and travails.
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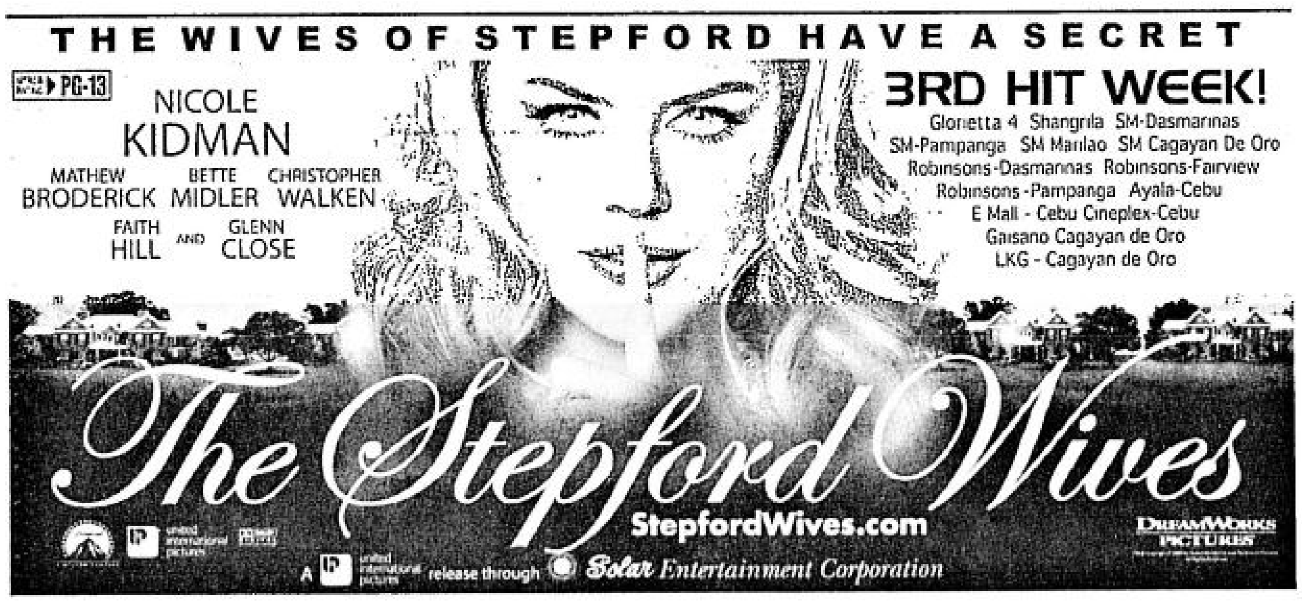
THE WIVES OF STEPFORD HAVE A SECRET
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GMA 7 fires publicist over column feed on Kris

GMA Network has fired its Entertainment TV Publicity head, Ma. Theresa "Tet" Defensor, for loss of trust and confidence in connection with her release of a column feed criticizing the rival network's Kris Aquino (*See related story, this page*).

A GMA Network statement said the company found Defensor guilty of misconduct and dishonesty.

When Inquirer Entertainment requested Defensor to comment, she only said she has received the letter terminating her services but added, "as usual, I'll have to ask my brother," Tiny, who is also her spokesperson.

In a letter to Defensor dated Aug. 25, 2004, GMA Network said it found that the publication of the column feed that contained personal statements against Aquino "has placed the entire company and its officials in a bad light and subjected them to embarrassment and to criminal prosecution and the risk of liability for damages."

The GMA statement said the network earlier sent Defensor a "show-cause" letter asking her to explain how and why she sent out on June 16 via company e-mail the column feed for publication in tabloids. The release of the column feed caused Aquino to file an P80-million libel lawsuit against GMA Network officials.

The network said Defensor held a position of trust and confidence and it was her duty as manager of Entertainment TV Publicity to determine "whether the (column feed) is fit for publication or (it) can cause damage to the company."

The network said it also found Defensor guilty of falsely accusing VP for Entertainment Wilma Galvante of coercing her to sign a letter admitting full responsibility for the item. Galvante was abroad at the time Defensor signed her letter, it said.

The network said Defensor also "falsely stated" that Galvante and OIC for Corporate Communications Butch Raquel handed her the column feed for publication "when, in fact, Galvante was abroad" when Raquel gave Defensor the column feed item on June 2, 2004. It said Raquel did not instruct Defensor to send out the item for publication.

The network said Defensor's brother and spokesperson, Tiny, had discussed with Raquel the letter that Defensor prepared and signed, and the Defensors "posed no objection to its contents or its voluntary execution."

Tiny Defensor told Inquirer Entertainment, "We cannot stop them from doing that (firing his sister)." He said the firing and the perjury case the network earlier filed against his sister were "part of GMA 7's harassment" of Defensor.

"Time will tell who is telling the truth," he added.

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'Incredible!' says Aquino

By Marinel R. Cruz

"INCREDIBLE."

That is how Kris Aquino described the claim of two GMA 7 executives that they did not order the network's publicist Ma. Theresa "Tet" Defensor to send out a column feed that attacked the actress and TV host on the rival network.

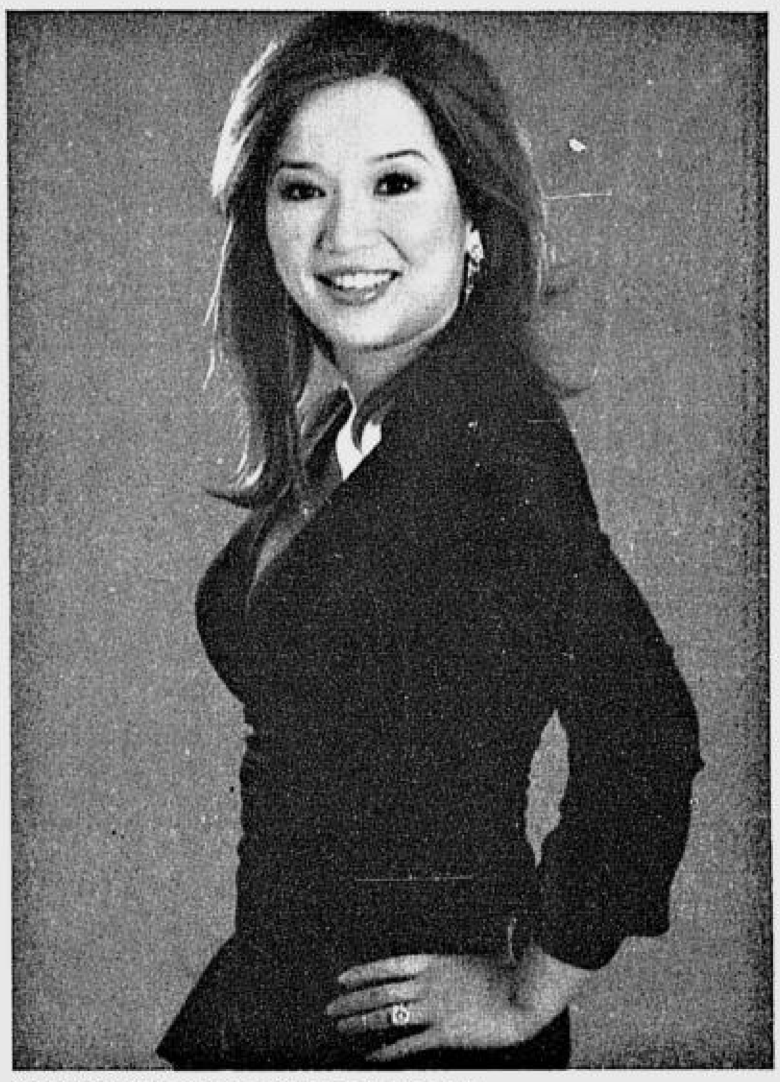
The e-mailed column feed, which criticized Aquino for, among others, not acting her age and for behaving like a "blushing *kolehiyala*," prompted her to file an P80-million libel suit against Defensor and other GMA 7 executives.

Also charged with libel are GMA Network president Felipe Gozon, EVP Jimmy Duavit, VP for TV entertainment Wilma Galvante and corporate relations OIC Butch Raquel.

In an affidavit that Galvante and Raquel had submitted to the Makati City Prosecutor's Office last month, the two executives maintained that Defensor exercised her discretion as a network officer when she sent out the item to tabloid entertainment columnists on June 16, or two weeks after Raquel gave it to her.

Raquel stressed that he never instructed Defensor to send out the item. Galvante said she was in China at the time Defensor said GMA 7 executives pressured her into signing a letter which said she (Defensor) was taking full responsibility for sending the column feed.

"Her claim that she does not know about the column feed is incredible," Aquino, in an affidavit, said of Galvante. "As the brain behind the programs, she cannot deny that her ultimate objective is to ensure that the programs that she creates . . . would harvest the highest ratings. Hence, she is also concerned with any negative or good publicity that her shows would garner."


AQUINO. "They cannot claim ignorance."

Aquino's "Good Morning, Kris" on ABS-CBN and GMA 7's "Sis" are on the same time slot, 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon, Monday to Saturday.

Aquino said Raquel tried to "save himself" when he said his managers, like Defensor, are given the discretion to plan, develop and pursue publicity strategies.

"He fulfills his responsibility by ensuring that his people do not release articles that will put the network in a bad light," Aquino said. "If he does not know about Defensor's e-mail then he is admitting that he was negligent or actually did not do his job."

Aquino pointed out that while Raquel denied instructing Defensor to distribute the column feed to the media, "he admits to handing the original copy of the column feed to Defensor."

"This admission," said Aquino, "necessarily gives rise to the conclusion that he is the author of the column feed. Moreover, as a veteran of the entertainment industry, respondent Raquel cannot deny that a column feed is drafted for the purpose of being released to the media. Hence, the term 'column feed.'"

One of the recipients of the e-mail, Abante columnist Jojo Gabinete, published it in full in his July 9 column, but identified Defensor as the sender and included her accompanying note in which she requested that the item be included in his column.

The column feed also mentioned Aquino's having had STD, as the actress herself revealed during her public quarrel with former Parañaque City Mayor Joey Marquez last year, and her affairs with married men. It said Aquino "deserved" the STD.

Aquino said the column feed was also published last June 20 in the column of Pilar Mateo in the tabloid Tumbok. "Mateo's article even revealed that the column feed was for the benefit of 'Sis'," Aquino noted. "Hence, respondents' claim that they never saw the column feed until after the filing of my complaint is incredible.

"They are in the television business," Aquino added. "Their primary concern is the promotion of their programs to entice more sponsors.

"They cannot feign ignorance of articles published in order to promote their shows."

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PHOTO BY VIC VALENCIANO

DID YOU KNOW...

Gary Valenciano performed before an audience of more than 5,000 at the Carling Apollo at Hammersmith in London on Aug. 28 and 29, Saturday and Sunday, according to wife **Angeli Pangilinan Valenciano**, who is with Mr. Energy in England. The show may well be the biggest concert featuring a Filipino performer in that foggy city, with fans coming from as far as the United Kingdom's Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Earlier in August, Gary V performed in a 40th birthday concert in Manila with their kids Paolo, Gabriel and Kiana.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BUSINESS

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B1

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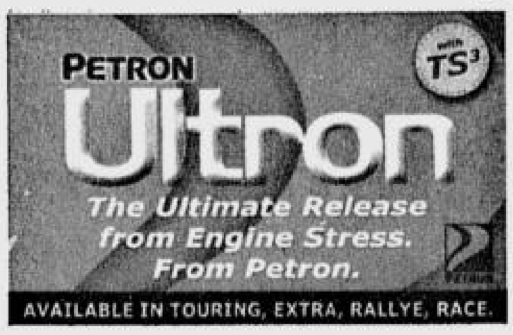
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New groups seen putting ₱18B into CAP

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

COLLEGE Assurance Plan Philippines, Inc. (CAP), one of the country's biggest pre-need firms, is expecting new investors to bring in P18 billion worth of assets, loans and fresh equity into the company within the year.

CAP director Robert John Sobrepeña said a local property company will be swapping P6 billion worth of property for CAP preferred, non-voting shares, which get the first crack at company dividends.

A New York-based fund will also extend a long-term loan worth $127 million or approximately P7.1 billion.

CAP is expected to sign agreements with the two groups before the end of this month, Sobrepeña said.

In addition to these inflows, he said that $100 million or P5 billion in fresh equity will come in by November from the same New York-based fund.

In exchange for these investments, Sobrepeña said CAP would relinquish five board seats, one for the land investment, two seats in exchange for the loan and possibly another two more for the new equity.

Despite this, major shareholders, which include the group of Sobrepeña, will keep control with six of the eleven board seats once all the investments have come in. He declined to identify the investors but said the investment proposals would be presented to the CAP board today.

Company sources earlier said that CAP would use the P7.1-billion loan to buy back the assets in its trust fund, which consisted of participation in approximately P3.4 billion worth of bonds backed by the cash flow from the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) project and certain real estate assets. The loan being discussed will be payable in full after 10 years and CAP will only need to pay interest payments during the term of the loan.

The MRT bonds were acquired in 2002 from Fil-Estate Management Inc. The bonds are zero-coupon notes issued by MRT III Funding Corp. Ltd. with an aggregate present value of $50.7 million and maturing in various dates starting 2013 to 2015. The bonds have a future value of approximately $195 million, the company had said in its financial report.

Aside from the MRT bonds, other assets the pre-need firm may buy back include its property investments in Nasugbu, Batangas.

CAP has applied for a permit to issue an additional P1 billion worth of new education plans. CAP's dealer license or its permit to sell securities will expire on Sept. 30.

The SEC is giving CAP until the end of September to present its final business plan and bring in a new investor to address its trust fund deficit. The plan will be a major factor in renewing the pre-need firm's dealer's license.

Sources in the company had said there was still demand for CAP education plans but it has become tougher to sell these due to reports about its trust fund deficit.

In its financial report last year, CAP said it had suffered recurring losses from operations amounting to P2.8 billion in 2003 and P403.3 million in 2002. Its trust fund assets, being managed by its trustee banks, "had not grown sufficiently" to match its total actuarial reserve liability or net liability to plan holders amounting to P25.6 billion. This resulted in a paper trust fund deficit of P17.2 billion as of end-2003.

More oil companies raise pump prices

By Abigail L. Ho

FOLLOWING the lead of their competitors, oil refiner Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and new oil players Total (Philippines) Corp. and Unioil Petroleum Philippines Inc. yesterday raised gasoline prices by 30 centavos a liter and diesel and kerosene prices by 45 centavos a liter.

Total dealers implemented the price increases at 12:01 a.m. yesterday, while Unioil started charging higher prices at 6 a.m. the same day.

High international oil prices prompted oil firms to implement yet another increase, the third in the consecutive weekly price adjustments that started in Aug. 16.

The benchmark Dubai crude averaged $38.55 a barrel in August, up by almost $4 from the July average of $34.65.

Unleaded gasoline based on the .Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) bellwether for finished products also soared to an average of $51:50 a barrel last month from only $46.52 in July.

MOPS-based diesel also surged to a high $51.66-a-barrel average in August, more than $5 higher than the July average of $46.25.

Other new players Eastern Petroleum Corp. and Seaoil Petroleum Corp. earlier announced their price increases but

MORE/ B3

INDICATORS

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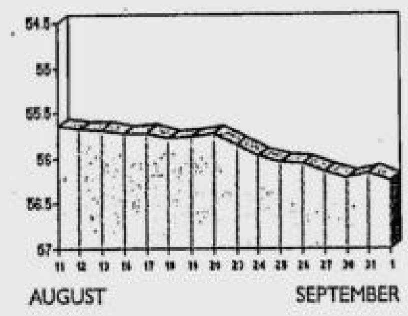


₱ 56.250 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Sept. 1, 2004

¥ 109.43 = $ 1

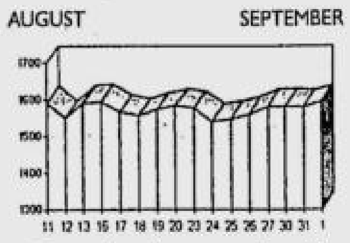
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 1, 2004

GOLD: $407.80-408.30

per ounce Hong Kong, Sept. 1, 2004

STOCK MARKET

Shares close higher on bargain hunting



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARE prices closed up 0.82 percent yesterday, touching a two-week high, on the back of further bargain hunting fueled by Wall Street's overnight rise and softer crude oil prices, dealers said.

However worries about the country's fiscal problems were keeping a cap on the market's upside, they said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 12.91 points to 1,592.74, its intra-day high. It hit a low of 1,576.44.

Turnover rose to 1.14 billion shares worth P928.7 million from 971.5 million shares worth P382.1 million on Tuesday.

In the broader market, gainers led losers 41 to 33, while 42 stocks were unchanged.

The all-shares index rose 14.49 points to 1,024.69.The commercial-industrial index advanced 19.76 to 2,550.10, and property gained 13 points to 525.35. Mining was down 11.27 at 1,745.83, and oil retreated 0.03 to 1.60. Banking and financial services shed 3.12 to 456.44.

"Bargain-hunters went back into the market, but buying was selective because concerns about the government's financial condition remain a major drag on investor confidence," said Rommel Macapagal of Westlink Global Equities.

"Investors want to know how the government will address its pressing fiscal problems, whether new taxes will be imposed or expenditures will be reduced, and by how much, as all these will have an impact on the economy."

Top-traded Globe Telecom rose P5 to P880. Rival Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was up P20 at P1,285, tracking gains of its American Depositary Receipts, which rose 9 US cents to $22.67 in New York last night.

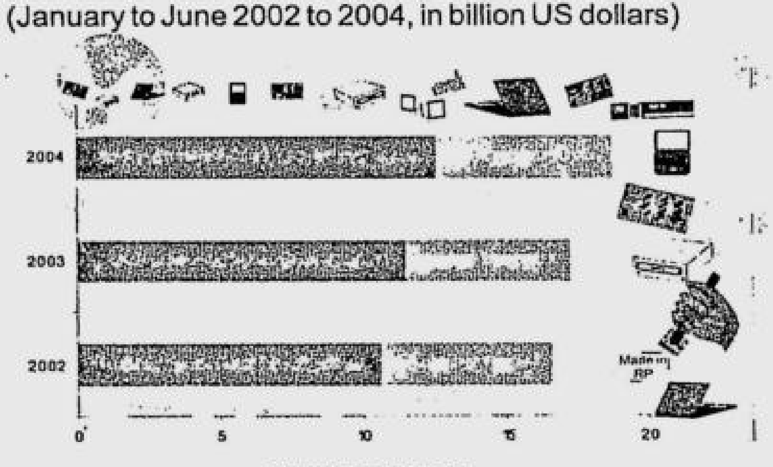
AFP

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Electronics exports

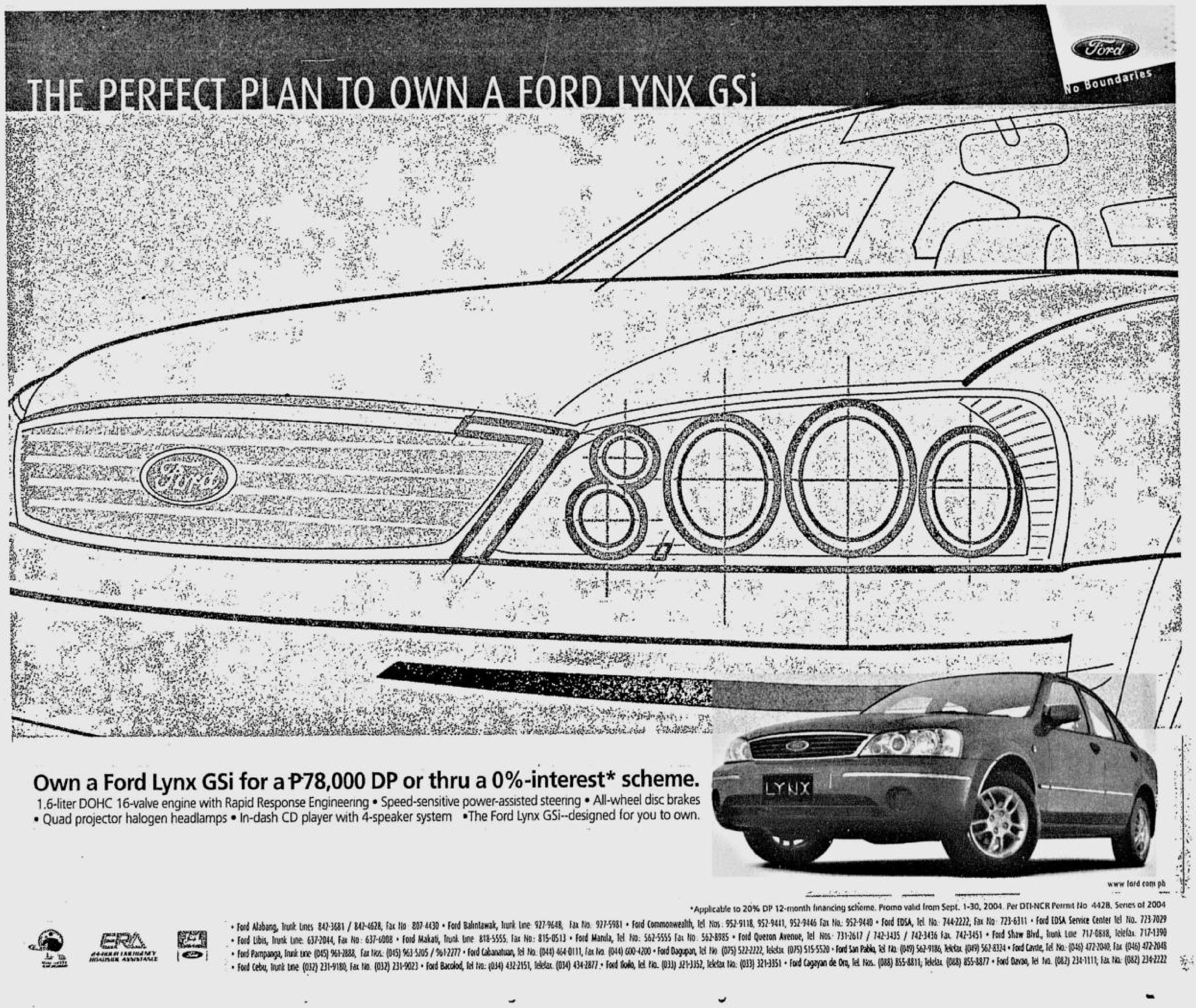
(January to June 2002 to 2004, in billion US dollars)



Sources: National Statistical Coordination Board, PDI archives

THE PHILIPPINES' electronics export performance remains one of the few bright spots in the country's bleak economy. Accounting for 67 percent of this year's first half total exports, it is up 9.7 percent to $12.6 billion. Exports include semiconductors, hard disc drives, laptops, processors found in cellphones and computers, video cameras, printers, etc.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research



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ERA 24-HOUR EMERGENCY ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

Union Bank raising funds via $150-M global bond float

By Doris C. Dumlao

UNION Bank of the Philippines, the Aboitiz group's banking arm, is set to tap the international capital market for the first time with a $150 million worth of global bond offering.

The bank will also be the first Philippine enterprise that will attempt to brave the global bond market after Malacañang's admission that the government was in the midst of a fiscal crisis.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, UBP said its board of directors had agreed to hire an arranger for this senior debt issuance. However, the management will have to seek the necessary regulatory approvals for the bond offering.

"The proceeds will be used to refinance some of the bank's maturing debts as well as for relending to the export sector as well as to businesses under the (government's) Investment Priority Plan," said UBP director and Aboitiz Equity Ventures chief operating officer Erramon Aboitiz in an interview.

International credit rating firm Moody's Investors Service has assigned a Ba2 rating to the bank's proposed senior unsecured debt issue due 2009.

Based on Moody's definition, this rating indicates substantial credit risk, particularly as a result of adverse economic change over time, but business or financial alternatives may be available to allow financial commitments to be met.

The credit rating firm said the rating outlook was negative—or may likely be downgraded in the future—in line with the revised outlook for the country's sovereign ceilings to negative and did not reflect bank-specific concerns.

Moody's said the rating reflected the bank's limited franchise and moderate financial strength.

"The bank is rated D for its bank financial strength, reflecting its solid capitalization, above-average profitability and professional management, but challenging operating environment," Moody's said in a statement.

The bank's other ratings are:

- Long-term deposit rating of Ba3 with a negative outlook;
- Short-term deposit ratings of "not prime" with a stable outlook;

Established in 1982 as a result of a merger between Union Savings and Mortgage Bank and Bancom Development Corp., Union Bank is currently the 13th largest indigenous bank in the Philippines.

The bank reported consolidated assets of P76.7 billion ($1.4 billion) as of June 30, 2004.

SMC's local beer sales up 21% in 1st 7 mos

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL Corp. (SMC) said its local beer operations posted a 21-percent increase in sales revenue in the first seven months of the year to P20.8 billion from year-ago level.

For July alone, beer sales hit P2.47 billion.

Operating income for the seven months amounted to P4.33 billion. SMC did not give comparative figures.

Operating income for July, reached P335 million, up 24 percent from P270 in the same month last year.

The company said it had maintained its focus on retail sales, kept effective relations with its dealers and improved product availability.

SMC also continued to gain from an improved distribution system, right product portfolio and the entry of new drinkers into the market.

SMC earlier said it had completed its purchase of a 50-percent stake in Australia's biggest juice maker Berri Ltd.

Although the Australian firm was valued at roughly $234.5 million, SMC has yet to disclose the acquisition price.

In a joint statement with Berri, San Miguel chair Eduardo Cojuangco earlier said the deal was an important plank in San Miguel's regional expansion plans.

"It is a terrific complement to our existing portfolio and our buy-in is consistent with San Miguel's strategy to acquire businesses with strategic fit with its core categories," he had said.

ROMY HOMILLADA

TOP NEWSPAPER OF 2004

The Philippine Daily Inquirer was named the Top National Newspaper for 2004 at the recent National Consumers Quality Awards held at the AFP Theater in Camp Aguinaldo. INQUIRER SVP for corporate services Dave Valdes received the award from Justo Ortiz, governor of the Lions Club International.

Pain in the knock

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THIS nearly bankrupt cute administration of Gloriaetta must really need all the money it can get its hands, and other parts of its anatomy, on.

For one, Gloriaetta is asking lawmakers to give up part of their "pork." But not all of it! Just a small part of it, congressman! Only 38 percent!

That is the non-edible kind of "pork," as evidenced by my brilliant use of the quotation marks, which automatically denote that what are eaten in this kind of "pork" are only the poor government project contractors. They are normally eaten alive.

Anyway, this cute administration does not even mind its headline-grabbing reversal of roles with the religious business, este, groups *lang pala*.

We usually give charity (i.e. lots of money) to the likes of Brother Mike, Ka Erdie, and our favorite Father, or "mother," which, of course, depends on the priest's sexual preference.

But now, the religion-business groups are called upon to give alms to this cute administration instead. The faithful gives to the Church leaders, who give to Gloriaetta.

To top it all, Gloriaetta was even said to be trying to mend fences with former Vice President Teofisto Guingona. Good heavens. Does he even have that kind of money?

* * *

THAT'S the same Guingona whom Gloriaetta had picked to become her vice. And I mean the position. She picked Guingona over Sen. Aquilino Pimentel.

As a result, Pimentel has become a first class oppositionist, taking every opening to become a pain in this cute administration's neck, plus other parts of its anatomy.

Anyway, that's the same Guingona whom the Palace unceremoniously dismissed as Foreign Affairs Secretary, thereby ostentatiously driving him away to the opposition.

But according to a recent press statement from the Palace, this cute administration now wants Guingona to help "unite the people in meeting the present crisis."

Okay, so it's clear that it's not his money that this cute administration is after. I just want to make it clear. I personally know that the guy has none.

But if Gloriaetta wants Guingona back (although, perhaps not in the same way that she now has the losing congressional candidate Willie Villarama back), is she even willing to address the problem which caused the rift between them, in the first place?

Now this is getting more interesting!

* * *

AT one time, you see, new justice secretary and former Congressman Raul Gonzales made noises about the reason for the rift between Gloriaetta and Guingona.

Gonzales was blaming the so-called Sikatuna group, which was trying to undermine Guingona with Gloriaetta, particularly regarding Guingona's handling of the country's relation with Washington.

The so-called Sikatuna group, in case you are not a member of the Manila Polo Club, is said to be headed by Roberto Romulo.

That is the same Romulo who was the foreign affairs secretary of Kuya Eddie, and who was unceremoniously fired over the Flor Contemplacion case.

(The quote which made Romulo famous at that time was, "what is all the fuss over a maid?")

While Gonzales is now the secretary of justice, Romulo is still the Presidential Adviser for Foreign Affairs, with the rank of Cabinet secretary. Big shot, in other words.

But then again, Gloriaetta also has a Cabinet-rank Presidential Adviser for Provincial Trips.

* * *

IN media groups, anyway, Romulo's latest claim to fame is his ongoing media war with The Philippine Star publisher and columnist Max Soliven.

If you believe Romulo, or at least the information he is peddling to publications abroad, such as the Singapore Straits Times, the reason why Soliven got mad at him was petty.

Supposedly, based on the Romulo version of it, Soliven was delisted as one of the guests to a White House gathering, during one of the visits of Gloriaetta to the United States.

And Romulo has been telling everybody, through strike-anywhere broadcast e-mails, that he actually had nothing to do with it.

That, of course, implied that he had the power to do it. But he did not.

And so to get back at Soliven, Romulo lodged a complaint with the Philippine Press Institute, launched a media campaign abroad and sued Soliven for libel.

What for? Well, I really don't know. Romulo is a government official, right? Public officials must not be onion-skinned, right?

I just know that somebody must be angling for the same DFA position from which Guingona was unceremoniously dismissed.

Now how will Gloriaetta handle the two of them, Guingona and Romulo, together again? Who will be knocked out this time, the pain or the neck? Watch out!

* * *

THERE is hope for us to get rid of the deadly TB. The same organization which launched the successful anti-polio campaign is doing it agai. This time against TB.

It's none other than the civic organization Rotary Club.

This Monday, Sept. 6, all the Rotary Clubs in the country, joining forces as one organization, will launch a campaign called "Stop Tuberculosis 2005."

The campaign was the brainchild of the governor of the Rotary Club District 3830, Tony Quila, who is a retired top executive of the Asian Development Bank.

When Quila launched the campaign early this year, about 40 Rotary Clubs immediately joined, mostly from his own district, covering the southern part of Metro Manila.

Now all the Rotary districts in the country are taking part in the campaign. You can be sure that something good will happen.

The same organization started the anti-polio campaign back in 1979. Initially the target was to immunize some six million Filipino children.

Today, the polio virus was said to have been eradicated. Not only here! But worldwide! What the Rotary Club did to polio, hopefully, can be done to TB.

Well, TB only affects around one-third of the population. That's roughly 30 million Filipinos. It kills around 30,000 Filipinos every year. Somebody has to stop it! I place my bet on the Rotary Club.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of September 1, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	16.75	16.75	10,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	41.5	41.5	41	41	324,300
China Banking Corp.	535	535	535	535	1,010
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	41.5	42	41.5	42	17,600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	30,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25	24.5	24.75	466,700
Philippine National Bank	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	2,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	8,000
Security Bank Corp.	21.75	21.75	21.75	21.75	21,500
Union Bank Of The Phil.	24	24.25	24	24.25	7,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2275	2290	2275	2290	690
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	2,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1530	1535	1530	1535	2,140
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	20	20	20	20	7,200
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	730,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	870	885	870	880	481,550
Ipeople Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	427,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	2,600,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	1,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.48	2.5	2.44	2.5	9,920,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.23	0.235	0.225	0.235	410,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1265	1290	1265	1285	183,850
Ivantage Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	1,750,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	190,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	15	14.5	15	9,100
Manila Electric Co. B	21.25	22	21	21.75	955,100
Petron Corp.	2.6	2.65	2.6	2.65	2,315,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	6,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	252,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	247,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	2.14	2.14	2.14	2.14	10,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	4.35	4.35	4.25	4.3	888,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	300,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	34,000
Union Cement Corp.	2.1	2.1	2.08	2.08	580,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	150,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29	29	29	29	100,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	25.5	26	25	25.5	416,200
RFM Corp.	0.76	0.79	0.75	0.79	220,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	410,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58.5	58.5	58	58.5	75,600
San Miguel Corp. B	69.5	69.5	69.5	69.5	1,000
Universal Robina Corp.	8.5	8.5	8.2	8.2	22,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	560,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	1,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	3,000,000
Ayala Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.3	5.5	1,030,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	10,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.029	0.026	0.028	42,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.36	1.36	335,000
APC Group Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	300,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	36,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	25	25.5	24.75	24.75	1,140,100
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	2,470,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.28	7,550,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.0875	0.12	0.0875	0.12	21,600,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.08	2.08	1.98	2.04	5,596,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.033	0.035	0.033	0.034	16,800,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	24.25	24.5	24	24.5	759,600
Global Equities Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.07	6,700,000
Ionics Inc.	2.16	2.28	2.06	2.14	1,984,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.76	1.76	1.74	1.74	86,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.3	1.34	35,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.1	679,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	12,690,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.155	0.16	0.15	0.15	1,050,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	20,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.145	0.15	0.125	0.145	1,760,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.41	500,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	160,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.155	4,810,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.24	1,600,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.78	1.88	1.76	1.78	887,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.04	1.04	100,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0775	0.0825	0.075	0.0775	15,900,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	20,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.71	3,590,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	1,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	130,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.32	0.36	0.32	0.32	1,980,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	20	20.5	20	20.25	291,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	25,000
Far Eastern University	420	420	420	420	300
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.5	4,544,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.1	0.17	0.1	0.155	5,720,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.235	0.24	1,840,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.95	0.96	0.94	0.95	3,920,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	300,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	400,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.41	0.41	970,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.8	3,971,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	25,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.21	0.215	150,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	194,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	106,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	223,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.031	0.032	0.031	0.031	8,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	150,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	1,160,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	114,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.004	0.004	30,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	520,000
Pacifica	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	5,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.7	2.7	85,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	200,000

CURRENCIES

September 1, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.820883	1.000000	56.147
Japan	Yen	0.007518	0.009158	0.5142
United Kingdom	Pound	1.479888	1.8028	101.2218
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.105243	0.128207	7.1984
Switzerland	Franc	0.648356	0.789827	44.3464
Canada	Dollar	0.625435	0.761905	42.7787
Singapore	Dollar	0.480021	0.584761	32.8326
Australia	Dollar	0.579801	0.706314	39.6574
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.177525	2.652661	148.939
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218902	0.266667	14.9726
Brunei	Dollar	0.478621	0.583056	32.7368
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000088	0.000107	0.006
Thailand	Baht	0.019747	0.024056	1.3507
UAE	Dirham	0.223504	0.272272	15.2873
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.2182	68.3983
Argentina	Peso	0.273627	0.333333	18.7156
Brazil	Real	0.279783	0.340832	19.1367
Denmark	Kroner	0.134463	0.163803	9.197
India	Rupee	0.017738	0.021608	1.2132
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216051	0.263193	14.7775
Mexico	New Peso	0.07212	0.087857	4.9329
New Zealand	Dollar	0.53832	0.655781	36.8201
Norway	Kroner	0.119344	0.145385	8.1629
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014008	0.017065	0.9581
South Africa	Rand	0.123767	0.150773	8.4655
Korea	Won	0.000713	0.000868	0.0487
Sweden	Kroner	0.109518	0.133415	7.4909
Syria	Pound	0.015927	0.019402	1.0894
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024251	0.029542	1.6587
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000429	0.000522	0.0293

RP signs 4 business deals with China, hopes for more

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FOUR business deals were sealed yesterday on the first day of President Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to China, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said.

The agreements include two supply contracts of coco fiber products and another two on the supply and distribution of resins used in adhesives and paints.

Purisima, who is with the President's contingent, said in a statement that the agreements would further strengthen the economic ties between the two countries.

"I have directed our foreign post in China to look for more opportunities for our local companies to sell their products," he said. "Our partnerships aim to gain from the economic prowess of this vast Asian country."

The first of the trade agreements was a supply contract for coco fiber products between Cocotechnologies Corp. and Guanzhou Rivers Enterprise Co. Ltd.

Under the agreement, Cocotech will supply a minimum of $1 million worth of coconut fiber products to Rivers for use in riverbank repair in Guandong, Pan Pearl River Delta and other areas in China for a period of two years.

Second is a supply contract for the supply of coco coir products between Philippine Environmentech Product Corp. (Pepco) and Guangzhou Tiahe Yi Xin Fiber Product Co.

Pepco will supply Yi Xin with a minimum of 100 tons to a maximum of 300 tons of baled coconut fiber a month. The deal provides for an option on additional deliveries within two years.

Third is a memorandum of agreement between Kemwerke, Inc. of the Philippines and Akzo Nobel Coatings of China.

Kemwerke will deliver to Akzo Nobel Coatings each month a maximum of 400 metric tons of short oil alkyd resin, polyol resin and related products used in making adhesives and paints.

The other is an agreement between Kemwerke and New Trump Enterprises Ltd. of China, where New Trump Enterprises would sell, market and promote Kemwerke's products in China.

Cebu Pacific signs $670-M aircraft deal with Airbus

By Clarissa S. Batino

CEBU Air Pacific yesterday signed an agreement with European firm Airbus SAS for the purchase of a dozen 150-seater A319 aircraft for $670 million.

Cebu Pacific president Lance Gokongwei said the acquisition of brand new planes, to be delivered between September 2005 and February 2007, would allow the low-cost airline to boost its position in the domestic and regional aviation industry.

The country's second-largest carrier owned by the Gokongwei family also signed a deal with Airbus for the lease of two, 168-seater A320s for delivery in the summer of 2005.

The airline's refleeting program would reduce Cebu Pacific's operating costs by between 20 and 40 percent, increase its seat capacity and efficiency and allow it to fly more frequently and even open new routes.

The purchase of the new planes would give Cebu Pacific the distinction of having one of the youngest fleets in the region.

Gokongwei said the brand-new airplanes would replace the company's current fleet of 12, 115-seater DC9 aircraft starting September 2005 to February 2007.

Airbus spokesperson Anthony Philips said the Cebu Pacific deal was the biggest for the European aircraft maker in the Philippines. The company was also wooing Philippine Airlines to buy new planes from Airbus.

GOKONGWEI

"It has reached a point wherein it has become more costly to operate older planes. With the new aircraft, we have more flexibility, lower fuel costs and can sell more seats," Gokongwei said.

Cebu Pacific said that new planes could fly eight to nine hours a day from the present six and a half to seven hours. The carrier operates the short-haul, low-fare market, where flights average one to one and a half hours. The airline's competitiveness depends on the number of flights it could mount in a day.

Gokongwei said 85 percent of the cost of the refleeting would be financed by debt to be guaranteed by European credit facilities Coface, Hermes and the British Export Credit Guarantee Department. "We already paid the 15 percent (balance) yesterday out of internal funds," he said.

Danilo Mojica, general manager of Cebu Pacific, said the company was looking to open flights to General Santos, Cotabato, Laoag, Legaspi and Dipolog.

Gokongwei said Cebu Pacific could revive its flights to Singapore, increase flights to Korea and start flying commercially to China and Japan during the course of the refleeting program.

"There is tougher competition in the market and we are beefing up our fleet for the kind of competition we are anticipating from foreign as well as domestic carriers," Mojica said.

Cebu Pacific said it now accounts for 38 percent of the market and this should continue to increase as economic growth expands and the airline business grows.

From seven flights a day to only two destinations when Cebu Pacific started operations in March 1996, the Gokongwei airline now flies 85 times a day to 15 local destinations and four overseas. The overseas routes are Hong Kong, Seoul in Korea, Guangzhou and Xiamen in China on charter trips.

The new aircraft would allow the company to fly to nine points in Asia. "The much improved range of the A319s is a key consideration as it would open opportunities to fly to growth areas in the region," Gokongwei said.

Mojica assured, however, that the company would pass on some of the savings of the re-fleeting especially to domestic passengers.

"With the new planes, the cost of operating per seat would go down. This would allow us to offer even more competitive rates or at least keep fares where they are now," he noted.

The Gokongwei carrier said it would seek tax incentives from the government for the refleeting program. The Board of Investments said Cebu Pacific could qualify for incentives under the 2004 Investment Priorities Plan.

NON-REMITTANCE OF TAXES

BIR cracks down on withholding agents

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has started a crackdown on big companies that failed to remit their collection of withholding taxes.

The move is part of the agency's drive to raise more funds for the cash-strapped government.

In an interview, Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the agency had received reports that some of its tax-withholding agents had been remiss in the remittance of their collections.

"We have information that there are (companies) who are withholding but are not remitting," Parayno said.

He said the BIR was now putting up a new computer system that would trap these violators.

"We've issued a regulation to taxpayers saying that they have to submit to us all those who claim creditable withholding tax and deduct from their tax payable," Parayno said.

"They have to back it up with a summary list in electronic form so that we can use that data so that we could also run after those people who withheld and issued those certificates," Parayno said.

He said the BIR had unmasked such violations among some in the country's top 5,000 corporations, but that the agency had widened its probe to include the top 10,000.

In one particular case, Parayno said the BIR discovered such violation when the company, after paying the withholding tax to the withholding agent, claimed a refund.

"The company from where they withheld the amount was in refund position and applied for a refund because they overpaid, so they have to attach the certificate. When we verified the certificate, we found out there was no remittance," he said.

Parayno said the BIR was working with the best lawyers to prosecute erring taxpayers.

"We are developing new measures to improve collection," he said.

Another area being probed by the BIR, Parayno said, was the proper remittance of tax payments for shipping tickets.

"The average price per ticket is a very low amount, indicating that many tickets are not being reported properly," Parayno said.

The BIR, the government's main revenue-collecting agency, aims to contribute P477 billion to the state coffers this year.

"We are supposed to grow at 12 percent to reach P477 billion. We are growing by only 10.33 percent," Parayno said.

"But it's still a much better year in the sense that last year, we had only a 7.9-percent growth. Our growth rate of 10.33 percent this year is higher than GDP (gross domestic product) plus inflation so we're growing faster than the economy except that we haven't reached our target. But that doesn't mean we can't do it," he said.

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Banks lukewarm to BIR's compromise proposal

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANKERS Association of the Philippines is lukewarm to the government's compromise deal on the reported back taxes of foreign currency deposit units (FCDUs) and offshore banking units.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, BAP executive director Leonilo Coronel yesterday said the banks would have to study the proposal further as they were still questioning the basis of the tax assessments made by the tax-collecting agency.

Under a proposed "middle ground" solution, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has offered to waive the interests and surcharges on FCDU and OBU back taxes from 1998 to 2003, reducing the assessed liability of the industry to only P11 billion from the original P31 billion.

The assessed amount represented the uncollected gross receipts tax, value-added tax and documentary stamp taxes when FCDUs and OBUs lost their tax-exempt status after the comprehensive tax reform program was enacted in 1997.

While the BAP was "not disputing" the offer, Coronel said the banks were cautious as accepting the compromise deal would mean that they were accepting the liability being claimed by the BIR.

"If you accept it and someone questions the amount later on, then you won't be coming from a position of strength because you have accepted the liability," Coronel said.

In the first place, he said the banks still believed that the BIR should not demand back payments from the FCDUs and OBUs.

"The FCDUs and OBUs are there because of a policy to encourage them and such policy has not changed till now," Coronel said.

The dispute between the BIR and the banks stemmed from the imposition of additional taxes on FCDUs and OBUs over and above the 10-percent tax on interest income as a result of an alleged "clerical error" in the Tax Reform Act.

When the comprehensive tax reform package was passed in 1997, legislators overlooked the omission of the phrase "in lieu of" and proceeded to pass a law that reinstated all other taxes that local banks pay, including taxes on income, documentary stamps and profit remittances. But while legislators admitted there was no intention to remove such tax exemption, the BIR insisted this was what was stated in the law and it must be collected covering the years that the provision was in effect.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. yesterday said the agency would still do further consultations on its offer.

More oil companies …

From page B1

implemented these yesterday.

Flying V, which made a similar announcement but for higher increases of 40 centavos a liter for gasoline and 50 centavos for diesel and kerosene, yesterday decided to match its competitors' price increase levels.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez had earlier exercised some moral suasion to get the oil firms to agree not to raise pump prices by as much as 60 centavos a liter, and instead just implement a 30-centavo-a-liter increase.

The oil firms heeded the energy chief's appeal by increasing gasoline prices by only 30 centavos a liter. However, they raised diesel and kerosene prices by 45 centavos a liter, 50 percent higher than what the Department of Energy sought.

Perez admitted that, according to DOE computations, oil firms still had an under-recovery of P1.50 a liter for diesel but an over-recovery of 80 centavos a liter for gasoline.

Under-recoveries and over-recoveries refer to changes in world oil prices that are not reflected at the pump.

The energy chief likewise appealed to oil firms not to implement another increase in the next two weeks and to "consider the recent downward movement in world prices the past three trading days before making any more adjustments in local prices."

Since the beginning of the year, gasoline prices have gone up nine times by a total of P5.30-P5.45 a liter, while diesel prices have increased eight times by a total of P4.25-P4.40 a liter.

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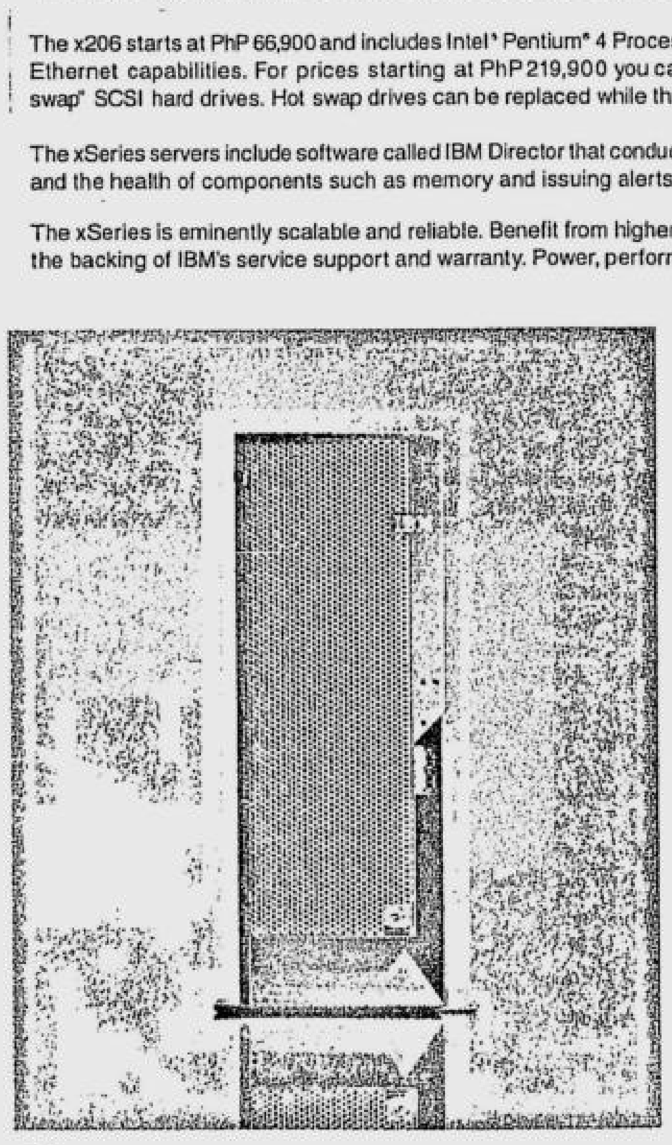

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People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Aries Espinosa

AutoloadMAX gives 'Libre Load' to finance retailers' businesses

INNOVATION leader Globe Telecom has launched another ingenious way to help its 300,000 strong network of AutoloadMAX retailers grow their business through its new 'Libre Load sa AutoloadMAX' promo.

'Libre Load' is an electronic raffle promo which gives registered AutoloadMAX retailers a chance to finance their business expansion absolutely free of charge. From Aug. 1 to Sept. 30, registered AutoloadMAX retailers who sell at least P100 AutoloadMAX load have a chance to be one of the 10 daily winners of P5,000 Libre Load. Winners will have their free bonus load credited in their commercial load wallet which they can in turn resell to help them earn more income.

GLOBE
AUTOLOAD
MAX
Globe
P5,000
LIBRE
LOAD

A retailer can accumulate P100 either by selling four AutoloadMAX at P25, two AutoloadMAX at P50 or one P44 and one P56. Other combinations are possible, the important thing to remember is that it should sum up to P100. Every P100 (accumulated) AutoloadMAX load sold daily entitles retailers to one (1) raffle entry. The higher the AutoloadMAX load sold, the higher the chance to win Libre Load! Active AutoloadMAX retailers can win up to 2 times during the promo duration.

According to Ferdz De La Cruz, Globe head of wireless business group, "We see the new 'Libre Load' promo as a way to encourage our existing network of retailers to regularly sell AutoloadMAX to their neighbors and friends who are either on Globe Prepaid or Touch Mobile. Unlike the usual sales commission however where cash is given, the 'Libre Load' promo gives ten AutoloadMAX retailers who qualify the chance to win in the daily draw, P5,000 worth of free load credits, which they can use as added business capital to help them earn more."

Aside from the benefits given to AutoloadMAX retailers, the 'Libre Load' promo will also give Globe Prepaid and Touch Mobile subscribers 20 percent bonus load whenever they purchase AutoloadMAX load credits during the promo period.

Joining the 'Libre Load sa AutoloadMAX' promo is a fast and easy way for retailers to avail of free business capital to help them on their way to becoming thriving business entrepreneurs. Still not an AutoloadMAX retailer? Now is the best time to be one!

Text DepEd through Globe 2327

GLOBE subscribers now have an upgraded, open channel of communication with the secretary of the Department of Education, which also gives them access to information and updates relevant to the department.

The Department of Education Text Messaging Service or DEtxt, aims to open up a two-way direct channel of communication between the Secretary, public school faculty, parents, students and the public using their Globe Handyphones. All the general public needs to do is text the keyword deped <space> message/name of sender and send to 2327. A different format is required of public school teachers and DepEd personnel: deped <space> guro <space> message/name of sender/employee number <space> station code <space> division code, and send to 2327. Only P1 will be charged for every text message sent.

Globe, the innovation leader in the country, has been very consistent in its support of the government's initiatives to make itself more accessible to the public. "This tie-up to upgrade the DepEd's DEtxt is but the latest expression of our commitment to support the government and give something back to the community," said Globe head of wireless business group Ferdz De La Cruz. Previously, Globe launched 'TXT GMA' which allows people with an open line of communication with the president. Using the SMS technology which Globe pioneered, the public may now also get in touch with various agencies such as SSS, GSIS the Department of Foreign Affairs and the department of Labor and Employment.

This latest partnership with the DepEd ensures that the public will be made more aware of announcements on holidays, suspension of classes due to natural disasters, announcements of national diagnostic tests and other special programs, textbook or furniture deliveries and other news.

Get that soft, smooth and healthy skin

WATER makes up 60 percent of the human body that provides moisture in the skin. The skin is considered to be a large water storage, yet moisture is lost, especially the skin on our face - it gets rough and dry.

Dry skin can be caused by a lot of factors. One is the natural evaporation of water from our skin. Studies show that about 4 to 8 oz. of water evaporates through the skin everyday. What's more, hot or cold air, low humidity, frequent use of harsh cleansing solutions can ruin the skin's protective layer and causes it to lose its natural ability to hold moisture.

When this happens, Facial Skin Dryness or FSD sets in. FSD happens when there's moisture loss caused by improper skin care and lifestyle habits such as frequent use of harsh soaps and scrubs, smoking, stress, lack of sleep, frequent exposure to the sun and air-conditioning.

If left unchecked, FSD can damage the skin's protective function and lead to premature wrinkles.

To prevent FSD, use dermatologist-prescribed Celeteque Facial Moisturizer. It is water-based and oil-free so it leaves no greasy after-feel. It is hypoallergenic, non-comedogenic, and it contains the combination of moisturizing agents: Dimethicone, Pro-Vitamin B5, Glycerin and Aloe Vera that deeply moisturize the skin. This moisturizer restores moisture balance and protects your skin from FSD.

Prevent FSD with a healthy lifestyle and use dermatologist-prescribed Celeteque Facial Moisturizer regularly. Know more about FSD, ask your dermatologist today.

Fantastic deals at Robbinsdale Hotel

EASILY the most preferred hotel in the heart of Quezon City, Robbinsdale Hotel launches another best-seller with its all-time discounted accommodation package from July to September 2004. Rainy Day Splash offers guests as much as 50 percent off on the third night, including complimentary Filipino or American breakfast, for a minimum of 3 nights stay. Standard room is at P1,500 nett only, while the Junior Suite is at P2,200 nett only. Massage Par Excellence Package for a relaxing, rejuvenating spa experience that is yet unparalleled at the Mendez Body & Face Facial, Salon and Spa, courtesy of Dr. Joel Mendez of Mendez Medical Group, a premier aromatherapy and massage company in the country. Overnight accommodation in a standard room includes Filipino breakfast and an hour of Swedish/Shiatsu massage for only P1,800. Board Examiners Package - weekly rate: P9,000 nett; Monthly rate: P30,000 nett. Plus up to 50 percent off in special discounts. Managed by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp (www.genesishotels.com). For inquiries and reservations, call Robbinsdale Hotel at 716-2583.

Product FILES

Toon lympics fever with Jollibee

MAKE way for your favorite Looney Tunes characters as they rush in and play their favorite sport with the new Jollibee Kids Meal Toon lympics. Kids will love to see Sylvester play one-on-one with Tweety on the Basketblock court. Make it an exciting water race for Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck as they stretch all their muscles to win in the Comicanoe. As Roadrunner and Wile E. Coyote faces off, it will be a neck-to-neck Maratoon race for them. Hold your breath as Marvin the Martian leaps to victory at the Spacejump. Dash yourself to the nearest Jollibee store and treat yourself and your kids a yummy langhap-sarap Jollibee Kids Meal of Yumburger, Jolly Spaghetti, Burger Steak or Chickenjoy and get any of the four Toon lympics toys.

Bits & Clips

3rd Annual AFCSR

THE AIM-Ramon V. del Rosario Sr, Center for Corporate Responsibility will hold its 3rd Annual Asian Forum for Corporate Social Responsibility Conference at the Shangri-la Hotel in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Sept. 2 and 3. This event, like in the past, promises to be the largest gathering in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility. This year's theme is "Altruism or Economics? Can CSR be sustained by one without the other?". The Asian Forum on CSR examines the need and value of CSR for companies operating in Asia. Addressed will be the drivers of CSR and how companies and civil society should move forward in a rapidly-changing Asia. For more information or reservations, visit the website at www.asianforum.com or call the event managers at 812-6289.

GTF's El Filibusterismo

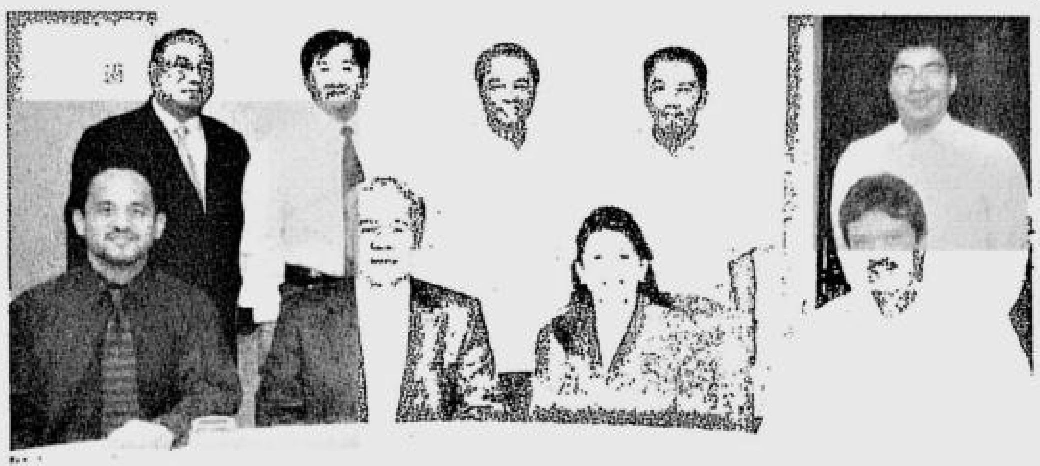
AFTER the highly successful run of Kanser (Noli Me Tangere), the 27th season of Gantimpala Theater Foundation (GTF) escalates further with the staging of El Filibusterismo. In the continuing saga of Dr. Jose Rizal's sequel to his first novel, the mood changes from the philosophical understanding to revolutionary fervor. Performances are on Sept. 3, 4 and 5 (10 a.m./2 p.m. - Saint Cecilia's Hall of St. Scholastica's College, Manila); Sept. 10, 11 and 12 (10 a.m./2 p.m. - AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City); Sept. 18 and 19 (10 a.m./2 p.m. - RFC Cinema, Las Piñas); and Sept. 24 and 25 (10 a.m./2 p.m. - Cabuyao Arts Centre, Laguna). For details, call the GTF marketing office at 899-5745/896-3503.

Best travel photo contest

A PHOTO contest about travel in the Philippines and its people has been launched recently. Dubbed "My Best Travel Photo", the photo tilt is open to all photographers, amateur or professional. The Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation, together with the Phil. Tour Operators Assn. (Philtoa) is the organizer of this special event of the 15th Philippine Travel Mart (PTM) to be held at the SM Megamall on Sept. 3 to 5. Entries must be 8x10 in color. Submit prints with the corresponding data sheet attached at the back of each entry. Film or digital camera output in photo paper processed by photo labs only. First prize is P10,000. Deadline is on Sept. 4 at the FPPF secretariat at the PTM exhibit area. Awarding is on Sept. 5 at the PTM exhibit hall. For inquiries, call 813-7420, 843-5341.

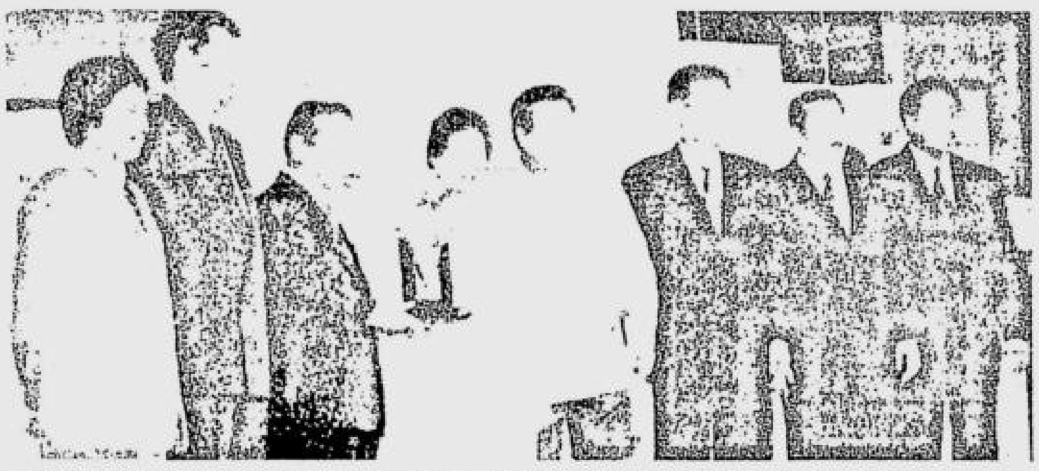
Gomez performs in SM

SM MEGAMALL in cooperation with Yamaha and Roland presents Joscephine Gomez "Through Time", a musical presentation in connection with the forthcoming celebration of Grandparents' Day at the Bldg. A Ground Floor Atrium of SM Megamall on Sept. 3 at 5 p.m. Assisted by Carlos Perion the at piano and Naldy Rodriguez at the synthesizer, the soprano will do a mixed program of opera arias, kundiman, Broadway and pop songs. Admission is free. For inquiries, call 687-7898 or 0919-876-3770.



INQUIRER HOSTS LUNCH FOR UNILAB

The Philippine Daily Inquirer recently hosted lunch for local pharmaceutical giant United Laboratories Inc (Unilab). In photo are Unilab president Carlos Ejercito (seated, second from left) and Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez (seated, second from right) along with other Unilab and Inquirer senior management executives.

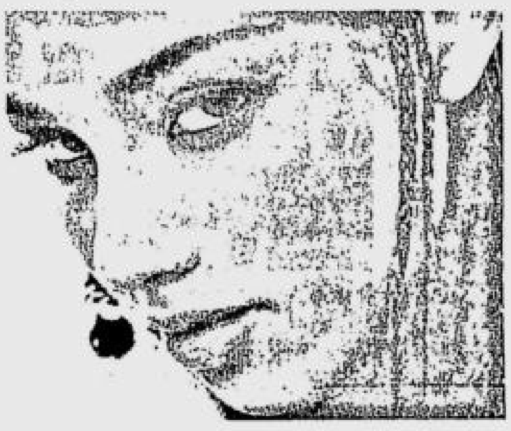


PAL GRANTS DIAMOND AWARD TO GERMALIN ENTERPRISES

Unprecedented in the history of domestic cargo forwarding industry, Philippine Airlines granted for the first time ever the Diamond Award for the year 2003-2004 to Germalin Enterprises Inc. Shown (from left): Jerry Calaluan , manager, Cargo Sales Domestic; Enrique Javier, VP sales; Avelino Zapanta, president and COO; Mr and Mrs Antonio Feliciano of Germalin; Henry So Uy, EVP, Commercial Group and EA to the chair and CEO; Edmundo de Luna, SAVP, Cargo Sales and Mario Pangan, manager, Cargo Sales International.

R&B royalty Alicia Keys live in Manila

YES, believe it or not! No Curfew watch stores "TakeYour Time" together with Tommy Hilfiger watches is responsible for Alicia Keys: Live in Manila! 2004 World Tour.



A rare artist among her own generation, a singer, songwriter and extraordinary pianist who combines classical training with an old school sensibility and a direct relationship with today's mix of hip-hop and R&B, Alicia relates to music much in the way legends like Stevie Wonder and Prince have always done, seeing their work as a continuous, ongoing journey rather than a collection of songs for a new album, always recording more material than could possibly fill one record. Not that Alicia herself would presume to be included in the category of such musical masters but certainly if her first award-winning multi-platinum album (2001's "Songs In A Minor") and her latest epic, "The Diary of Alicia Keys" are any indicators, she has clearly taken the first few steps in a career that already demonstrates endless promise.

Such is the hard work for the album and her songwriting that Alicia says: "When the final album was done, I was ecstatic," Alicia states. "I really felt the energy of the songs and hearing them as one piece of work, I was able to say 'yes, this is who I am right now.' I'm very proud, very happy and so excited about offering the album to the world."

For her Manila concert, Alicia will be performing songs from her latest album. Feel the energy of the Alicia's songs in Alicia Keys: Live in Manila! 2004 World Tour on Oct. 9, and mark it as an occasion to have in your Diary for Alicia Keys.

More details to come within the next few weeks. In the meantime, you can visit any No Curfew watch store outlet and check out their latest Tommy Hilfiger watch models and maybe, if you're lucky enough, even win tickets to the concert.

2ND WHISPER-SUMMER'S EVE BADMINTON CUP

Procter & Gamble and Blooming Fields Phils Inc, recently inked an agreement for the 2nd staging of Whisper-Summer's Eve Badminton Cup slated at Yonex Philippines Badminton Club. Shown in photo are (seated from left): Queenie Go-Cua, assistant brand manager for Whisper brand of Procter & Gamble; Gina Godinez, managing director of MXN, the marketing arm of the badminton event; Maizie Frances Sycip-Qua, general manager of Blooming Fields Phils Inc; Bernard Abeleda, producer of the event from Anavision Production Management and Creative Services and Melody dela Cruz, managing director of Yonex Phils Badminton Club. Tournament fee is P600/player. Last day of registration/payment is on Oct. 24. The event will take place at Yonex Phils Badminton Club on Nov. 6 to 7. To join, visit any Yonex outlets or download registrations at www.pbnet.net and www.bloomingfields.net. For more details, call Ivy or Hazel at 0917-429-8892; 817-6514; 817-6532 and 728-8871.

EUROLUX MARKS 4TH YEAR

Eurolux International Lightings Inc, the premiere brand known all over Asia when it comes to excellent quality lightings recently made its radiant presence highly visible at the successfully concluded WorldBex exhibit held at the World Trade Center. Now on its 4th year of operation in the Philippines, Eurolux, under the indefatigable hands-on management of its GM Allan Clores is bent in his efforts and unswerving in his commitment to enable Eurolux to reach more and more homes, commercial establishments and industrial sites not just in Metro Manila but in all parts of the country. Just recently, Eurolux has launched an aggressive awareness campaign to further propel the brand and its various product lines as a premium household byword that satisfies everyone's lighting needs.

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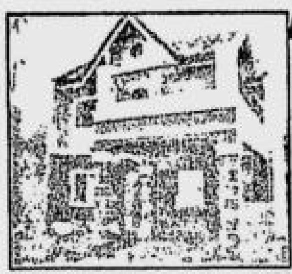

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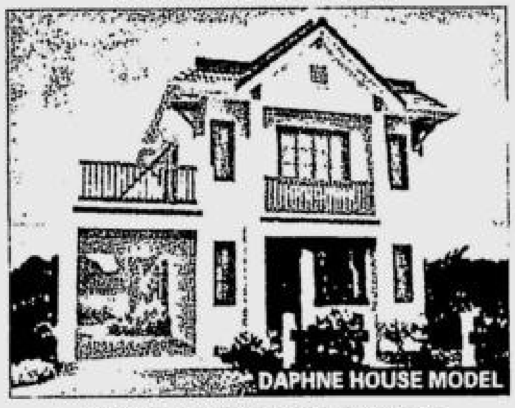

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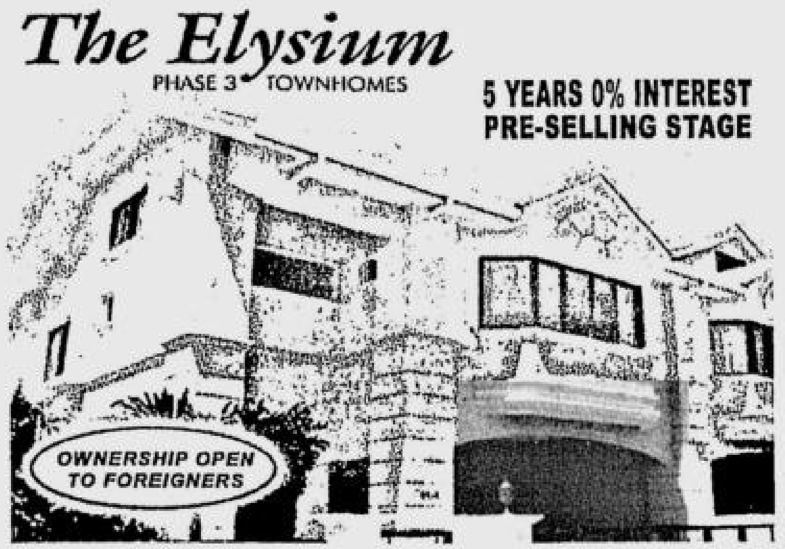

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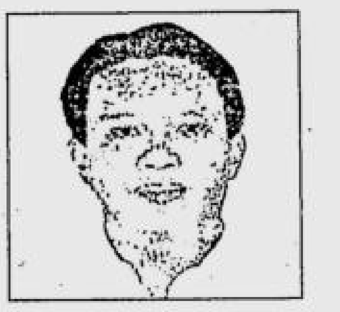
NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



ERNEIL G. DY-LIM, whose picture appears above, and with given residence address at #1701-A Landmark Village II, Valle Verde 2, Pasig City and office address at Rm. 2904-B, 29th Floor, West Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Centre, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City, has been issued a **WARRANT OF ARREST** by the Regional Trial Court of Pasig City, Branch 153 for **seven (7) counts of ESTAFA** under Criminal Case # 127457 to 63. Mr. Dy-Lim is currently the **President of DTECH MANAGEMENT, INC.** which has business dealings with the ***Land Transportation Office of the Department of Transportation and Communication***.

For any information that can lead to his arrest, please contact Phone No. 411-9002 or 415-8789 (office hours). A reward awaits any information who will provide reliable information that will lead to his arrest.

(PDI - Sept. 2, 2004)

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Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on September 9, 2004, 10:00 AM at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

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COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI-Aug. 26 & Sept. 2, 2004)

WTO approves sanctions vs US over anti-dumping

BRUSSELS, Belgium—The World Trade Organization has authorized the European Union and seven other leading US trading partners to impose over $150 million worth of sanctions against the United States for failing to repeal anti-dumping rules already deemed illegal by the WTO.

The ruling Tuesday by the Geneva-based organization allows the complainants to fine the United States up to 72 percent of money collected from foreign exporters under the so-called Byrd Amendment.

That legislation, dating from 2000, empowers Washington to hand over to US companies the duties imposed on foreign firms judged to be unfairly dumping cheap goods on the US market.

A statement from the eight complainants estimated that money totaled about $240 million last year.

"It is clear that the Byrd Amendment is a WTO-incompatible response to dumping ... and must therefore go," said EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy.

However, the EU and the other complainants—Japan, Brazil, Canada, Chile, India, South Korea and Mexico—indicated they would hold off from imposing sanctions.

Instead, they are likely to use the threat of retaliation to press the U.S Congress for an early repeal of the legislation.

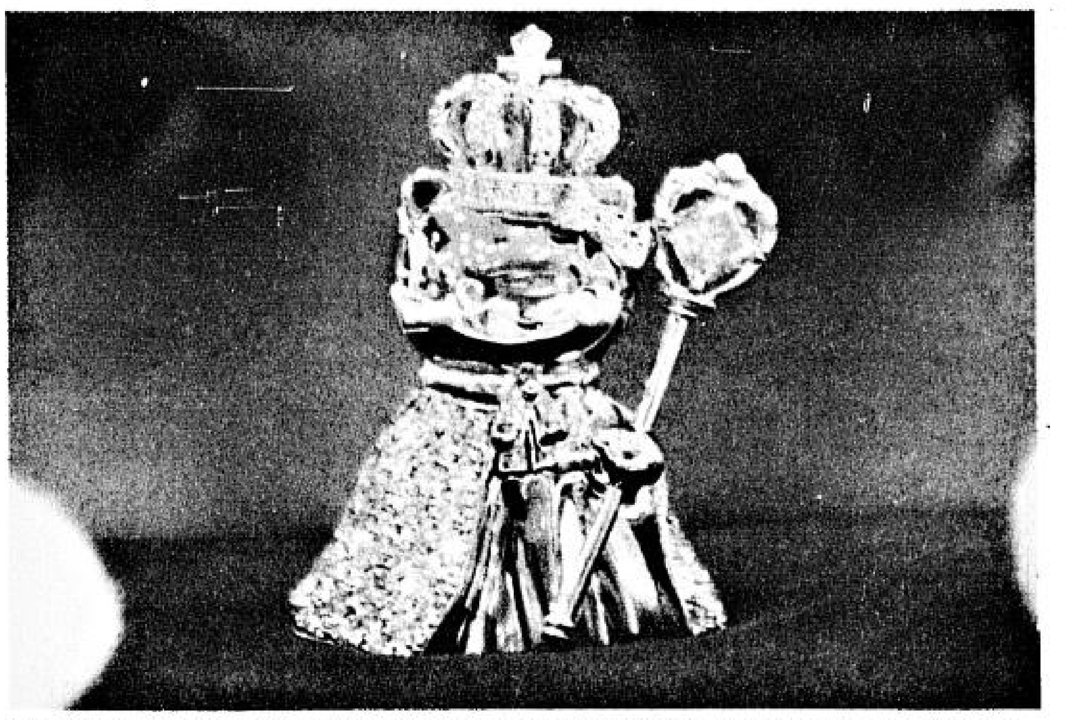
A joint-statement from all eight said they could "exercise their retaliatory rights, at any time deemed appropriate."

EU and Japanese officials said they hoped quick action by Washington would avoid sanctions.

"Japan strongly hopes the United States will repeal the Byrd Amendment at an early date," Japan's economy, trade and industry minister, Shoichi Nakagawa, said in Tokyo.

Named for its sponsor, West Virginia Senator Robert Byrd, the three-year-old amendment primarily benefited American steel manufacturers. Other recipients include makers of pasta and candles.

The WTO had given the United States until the end of last year to change the law, but although the Bush administration recommended the amendment should be repealed, US Congress has yet to make the changes. *AP*



QUEEN Hello Kitty doll in a diamond-studded crown and robe holding a scepter decorated with a 0.753-carat pink diamond is displayed by salesclerk Chiharu Ono at Tokyo's Mitsukoshi Department Store. The 10 million yen (US$91,600) platinum made Hello Kitty with a total of 4.1-carat diamond was made to mark the 30th birthday of the world's renowned kitten, celebrated in November. AP

IMF to renew talks with Argentina

BUENOS AIRES—Argentina and the IMF have agreed to resume talks on a stand-by deal once the South American country has restructured its private debts, IMF managing director Rodrigo Rato said Tuesday.

"President (Nestor Kirchner) and I agreed to resume discussions at the first possible opportunity, and once we have had a chance to assess the outcome of the debt restructuring and the continued further work on the structural issues outlined in the structural reform agenda of Argentina's program," Rato said in a statement.

"My main goal in coming to Buenos Aires was to offer my support to the president for normalizing Argentina's economy and standing in the financial markets, with a view to attracting the new investments necessary for sustaining growth and poverty reduction for the benefit of all its citizens," Rato added.

The International Monetary Fund has yet to clear a third payment to Argentina from a program, signed in September of last year, which restructured $21 billion in debt to multilateral lenders.

The international financial institution is pressing Argentina to show progress in discussions to repay bondholders after a massive default in December 2001, now covering some $104 billion including interest.

Bondholders have rejected Argentina's offer to pay just one-quarter of the bonds' face value.

Last month, Kirchner said that IMF mistakes, highlighted in an audit by an IMF watchdog, had pushed about 15 million people into poverty in Argentina.

But the IMF's Independent Evaluation Office blamed Argentina for failing to avert the crisis. It also criticized the IMF for backing wayward policies right up to the December 2001 economic collapse. *AFP*

Enron assets face auction

HOUSTON—Bankrupt Enron Corp.'s most prized remaining assets—its domestic natural gas pipelines—will be on the block in a quiet auction Wednesday.

Bids for CrossCountry Energy Corp., which holds Enron's whole or part interest in three domestic natural gas pipelines, will be considered at an auction at the Houston offices of Enron's main bankruptcy lawyers, Weil, Gotshal & Manges, said Enron spokesperson Jennifer Lowney.

When the auction closes, the company will choose a winning bid to present to US Bankruptcy Judge Arthur Gonzalez for approval at a Sept. 9 hearing.

So far, Enron has publicly acknowledged two bidders interested in CrossCountry.

NuCoastal LLC, a company run by Texas billionaire and Coastal Corp. founder Oscar Wyatt Jr. offered $2.2 billion in May.

Then in June, a joint venture of Southern Union Co. and GE Commercial Finance Energy Financial Services offered $2.3 billion. Both offers include $430 million in assumed debt.

The CrossCountry sale is part of Houston-based Enron's plan to emerge from one of the most expensive and complicated bankruptcies in history.

The reorganization plan, approved by Gonzalez in July, also assumes Enron will sell Portland General Electric, its Pacific Northwest utility, to an investment group backed by Texas Pacific Group for $1.25 billion in cash and $1.1 billion in assumed debt, as announced last year.

If those sales close later this year as expected, all that will be left of the scandal-ridden company that once claimed $100 billion in revenues and pioneered trading operations beyond energy will be Prisma Energy International Inc., a smattering of pipeline and power assets in 14 countries.

The Enron name will disappear.

Assuming the sales close, Enron will distribute a total of about $12 billion to creditors—92 percent in cash and 8 percent in Prisma stock. *AP*

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Oil slides, supply fears ease

WASHINGTON—The price of oil slid toward $42 a barrel Tuesday despite confusion about the status of Iraqi exports, indicating that the market has become less worried about the global balance of supply and demand.

With the busy summer driving season nearing an end, the demand for oil from refineries is expected to taper off—and that contributed to the decline in prices, traders said.

Crude futures have declined by about 14 percent since Aug. 19, when they settled at a record high of $48.70 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

On Tuesday, light crude for October delivery fell 16 cents to $42.12 in Nymex trading.

"Supply fears, in general, are diminishing," said James Steel, director of commodities and oil research at Refco, a New York-based brokerage.

A few weeks ago, there were concerns that output could suffer in Russia and Venezuela.

Now, the likelihood of that happening in either of those countries has diminished significantly, Steel said.

Still, the status of Iraq's crucial oil exports was mired in confusion Tuesday, with government and industry officials giving contradictory statements about whether oil was flowing or whether there were even oil tankers at the port in Faw, Iraq.

Several analysts said that given the lack of clarity, the fact that the market did not rally higher augurs even lower oil prices. Supply uncertainty in Iraq is the kind of information traders had cited in recent weeks to explain the rapid run-up in oil prices in mid-August.

The underlying market conditions still support higher-than-normal oil prices, though, analysts said.

The main problem right now is that there is only a thin margin—perhaps one percent—of spare output capacity, giving extra importance to even the slightest threat of a supply disruption. *AP*

SE Asia ministers meet to further cooperation

JAKARTA, Indonesia—Economic ministers from Southeast Asia will push to liberalize trade in 11 key sectors when they meet Thursday, a crucial step toward achieving their goal of forging a regional economic community by 2020, officials said.

Ministers from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations will also discuss forging free trade agreements with a number of other countries, including China, South Korea, the European Union, New Zealand and Canada.

Officials said they hope the talks will build on successes at last year's Asean summit.

During the meeting on the Indonesian island of Bali, Asean leaders concluded an ambitious accord to fashion an Europe-like economic community by 2020 which would permit the free flow of investment, trade and labor in a region that boasts annual trade of more than $700 billion.

Economic ministers are expected to take a first step toward that goal when their three-day meeting opens Thursday in Jakarta, committing to liberalize 11 key sectors that include agriculture products, automobiles, electronics and textiles.

Some of the talks, officials said, will focus on convincing member countries to reduce remaining tariffs and eliminate other non-tariff barriers that have hindered the free flow of goods.

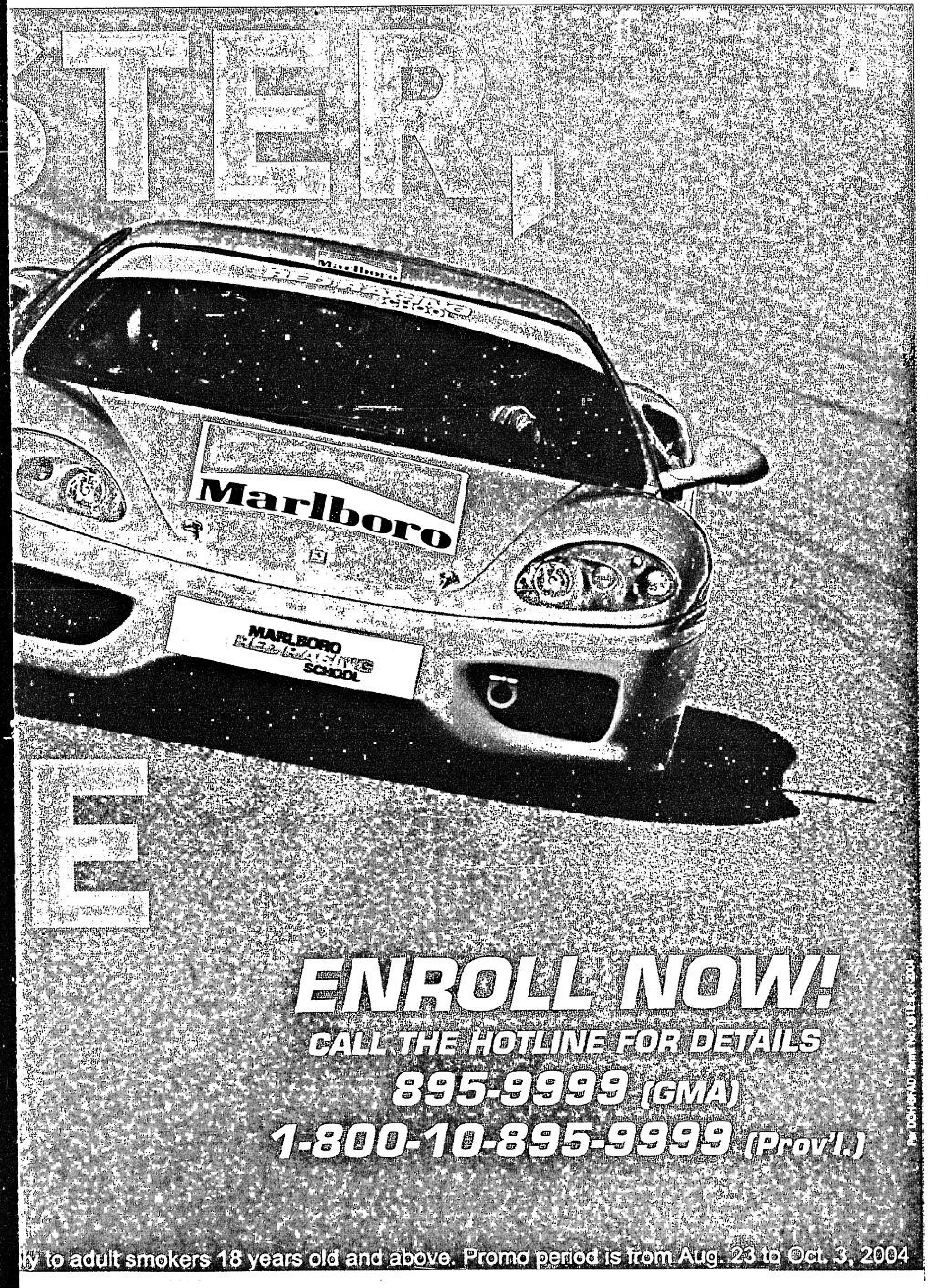
"There is a strong push to do this," said Ramon Vincente Kabigting, a director in the Department of Trade and Industry.

"We've come to realize the world is changing rapidly and a lot of trade opportunities will be missed if we don't become more integrated," Kabigting said.

Ministers are also expected to hold a series of meetings with non-Asean countries about forging free trade agreements, Kabigting said.

Discussions with Canada and the European Union are just getting off the ground, he said, while Asean is expected to agree on dates for starting negotiations with South Korea, China and Japan.

Beijing and Asean are already committed to establishing by 2010 a free-trade area that would combine their huge markets. *AP*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US consumer confidence down in Aug.

NEW YORK—Consumers' renewed worries about job prospects prompted a larger-than-expected drop in consumer confidence in August, a private research group said Tuesday.

The Consumer Confidence Index, which had been on the rise since April, dropped 7.5 points to 98.2 from a revised reading of 105.7 in July, according to a report from The Conference Board.

The reading was much lower than the 103.5 that analysts had expected, and was the lowest since May, when it registered 93.1.

"The slowdown in job growth has curbed consumers' confidence," said Lynn Franco, director of The Conference Board's Consumer Research Center, in a statement.

"The level of consumer optimism has fallen off and caution has returned. Until the job market and pace of hiring picks up, this cautious attitude will prevail."

Economists closely track consumer confidence because consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of all US economic activity.

The worse-than-expected report is unsettling, offering another fresh dose of evidence that the economy continues to be in a fragile state.

On Monday, the Commerce Department reported that consumers spent more freely in July, raising hopes that June's economic pause would only be temporary.

The government also announced, however, that consumers' incomes that month grew slower than analysts expected.

Mark Vitner, an economist at Wachovia Securities, sees the latest snapshot of consumer confidence as only a "bump in the road" and expects consumer confidence will rebound in September.

"Consumers still sense that the recovery is on track, and they are expressing their concerns on the lack of job growth," he added. *AP*

Nissan targets 12% of SE Asia vehicle mart

TOKYO—Nissan Motor Co. aims to more than double its vehicle sales in Southeast Asia to capture 12 percent of the market within three years, the company said Tuesday.

Tokyo-based Nissan, Japan's No. 2 automaker, hopes to sell 220,000 vehicles in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines in 2008, a company spokesperson told Dow Jones Newswires.

That would be two and a half times the number it sold in those countries in 2003, she said.

The company forecasts that the Southeast Asian market will grow by 30 percent to 1.8 million vehicles by 2008 from its 2003 level, she said.

If Nissan meets its target, it would capture 12 percent of total vehicle sales in those countries. In 2003, Nissan held a 5.5 percent share of the market, she said.

Nissan plans to make Thailand a key export hub.

In July, Nissan committed 10 billion Thai baht ($240 million; euro 199 million) to develop new models and increase production capacity there, the spokesperson said.

Other Japanese automakers have also begun to focus on Southeast Asia.

Toyota Motor Corp., Japan's largest automaker, said last week that it has started selling a new pickup truck in Thailand which it plans to export to Europe, Oceania and other Asian countries from November.

The company said it was the first step in a project to roll out five multipurpose vehicle models worldwide. *AP*

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the World Bank towards the cost of the Judicial Reform Support Project (JRSP) and intends to apply a portion of the loan to eligible payments under this Contract.

One of the initiatives identified in the reform program is the Judicial Reform Support Project (JRSP), which is being financed by the World Bank (WB). This particular initiative seeks to 1) improve case adjudication and access to justice; 2) enhance the integrity infrastructure of the Court; and 3) strengthen the capacity of the Supreme Court to manage the Judiciary. The project will be implemented for a six (6) year period, with loan effectiveness date commencing in December 2003 and closing in December 2009.

The Supreme Court of the Philippines now invites Individual Consultants to undertake Consultancy Services for the following:

a. Information Systems Specialist

The Consultant is expected to provide expert's advice to the Supreme Court on Information Systems-related issues, from both a strategic and operational or tactical perspective, and in the following areas, among others:

- Enterprise-wide Business Information Systems
- Business Systems requirements, functionality, and re-engineering
- Conceptual designs for a Business System solution
- Business Systems integration
- Business Systems architecture
- Short and medium term Business Systems related project plans
- Business Systems implementation approaches
- Evaluation Risks
- Data migration / conversion

The Consultant should have an extensive experience and knowledge of enterprise scale Business Information Systems, covering Financial Management, Accounting, Resource Planning and Judicial Administrative Systems. The Consultant should display sensitivity to, and cultural understanding of the environment into which the business systems are to be introduced. Strong communications skills supported by a strong ethical basis are essential in understanding this assignment. Experience in similar assignments within the Asia/Pacific region and specifically the Philippines would be an advantage.

b. Information & Communication Technology (ICT) Specialist

The Consultant is expected to provide expert's advice to the Supreme Court on ICT-related issues, from both a strategic and operational or tactical perspective, and in the following areas, among others:

- IT infrastructure in the SC and the Judiciary
- Proposed ICT related investment plans
- Short and medium term ICT related project plans
- LAN / WAN / VPN / Web, etc.
- IT infrastructure implementation approaches
- Evaluation of Risk
- Data migration / conversion
- Security, Disaster Recovery, Obsolescence Planning

The Consultant should have an extensive experience and knowledge in the development and implementation of enterprise-scale ICT projects. He/She should have extensive knowledge of telecommunications and data networks and technologies, server platforms and operating systems, enterprise technology infrastructure and architecture. The Consultant should display sensitivity to, and cultural understanding of the environment into which the business systems are to be introduced. Strong communication skills supported by a strong ethical basis are essential in understanding this assignment. Experience in similar assignments within the Asia/Pacific region and specifically the Philippines would be an advantaged.

c. Procurement Specialist

The Consultant is expected to review the procurement processes established by the procuring entities of the Supreme Court and formulate recommendations aimed at improving and strengthening the current systems in accordance with the national government and foreign financial institutions' procurement policies, rules, procedures and guidelines. The Consultant is expected to provide technical expertise and assistance in all matters of procurement, including the formulation of capability building plan for the target organizations and personnel of the Supreme Court to facilitate transfer of knowledge.

The Consultant must be at least a master's degree holder in either Business Management, Engineering, Logistics Management or related fields; with at least seven (7) years of experience in the management of procurement and logistics system of local and/or foreign assisted projects; adept with Government of the Philippines (GOP) issuances and World Bank Policies, Rules, Procedures and Guidelines on Procurement; experienced in design, development and implementation of computerized procurement and logistics management information systems; knowledge of records management systems (both automated and paper files) to ensure accurate maintenance of files and ease of retrieval; has the initiative and judgment to resolve a variety of complex procurement problems.

Interested individuals are required to submit not later than 2:00 P.M. on or before 13 September 2004 one (1) original and four (4) copies of their Curriculum Vitaé (CV) to **Justice Presbitero J. Velasco, Jr.**, Court Administrator and Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee for the JRSP, c/o **Engr. Nestor U. Venturillo**, Head, BAC-JRSP Secretariat, 6th Floor, Centennial Building, Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila, Tel. #552-9584.

The Individual Consultant will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines on the Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers, January 1997 (revised September 1997, January 1999 and May 2002).

The Supreme Court reserves the right to reject any or all offers, waive any defect or informality therein and accept the offer which it deems most advantageous to the Court.

02 Sept. 2004

(Sgd.) **JUSTICE PRESBITERO J. VELASCO, JR.**
Court Administrator and
Chairman JRSP-Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Sept. 2, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CENTRAL OFFICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
BLDG. #6, SAN LAZARO COMPOUND, RIZAL AVENUE, STA. CRUZ,
1003 MANILA, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (632) 743-8301 LOCAL 1601; Website address: www.doh.gov.ph

August 29, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Department of Health (DOH) received financing from the Commission of Information and Communication Technology's e-government fund for the automation of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD), wherein twenty million pesos (P20,000,000) has been earmarked as approved budget of contract (ABC) for the "Development and Implementation of an Automated Solution for the BFAD."
2. The DOH hereby invites firms with the expertise and at least 3 years experience in project management, systems engineering, systems improvement and information system and web development and implementation to apply for eligibility and for shortlisting. Interested bidders may download requirements from the DOH website or inspect the bid documents September 3, 2004, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Further information may be obtained from the Central Office Bids and Awards Committee (COBAC) Secretariat namely, Ms. Coney Liberan/Ms. Debbie Rabi at 1/F Building 6, DOH, San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz Manila, Tel. No. 743-8301 local 1214 or 1601 respectively or send an e-mail to **csliberan@co.doh.gov.ph** or facsimile to 711-6061/711-8273.
3. A complete set of bid documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon submission of a letter of intent and upon payment of *non-refundable fee* of five thousand pesos (PhP5,000). Deadline for the submission of eligibility & shortlisting requirements is on September 17, 2004 at 10:00 am.
4. Major components of the project includes, system engineering, system and software development of the BFAD integrated information system and website, scanning and indexing of licensing documents, identification of additional hardware and software required, training and systems implementation and maintenance.
5. A pre-bid conference will be held on September 27, 2004 at 2:00 pm at the COBAC Conference Room. Only shortlisted consultant will be invited to submit a proposal not later than October 22, 2004. The proposal shall be evaluated using a quality-cost based procedure at 60/40 weight in favor of technical. Only technical proposal with 75% rating will be finally considered for evaluation. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security valid for ninety (90) days equivalent to 1% of the ABC if in the form of certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft confirmed by a reputable local bank or 1.5% if in the form for a bank guarantee confirmed by a reputable local bank.

The Department of Health reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and/or reject all bids at any time prior to award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds to the Department of Health.

By Authority of the Secretary of Health:
(Sgd.) ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Undersecretary of Health
Chairperson, COBAC

(PDI – September 2 & 6, 2004)

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

In compliance with POEA regulation on the renewal of License, we wish to announce that the following employees are no longer connected with **Magsaysay Maritime Corporation – Crew Manning Operations** as of August 31, 2004:

Jose Eduardo Santiago S. Hilado
Celso A. Bechayda
Kyra Pamela C. Bontia
Ruz C. Florida
Luisito P. Flores
Melchor M. Pensotes

(PDI–Sept. 2, 2004)

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PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO BID

The PUBLIC ESTATES AUTHORITY (PEA) is inviting interested parties to participate in the public bidding for the sale or lease of eleven (11) lots on a serviced land basis, located at the Central Business Park 1 A, Bay City (formerly known as Boulevard 2000), Pasay City, for mixed use or commercial development purposes.

1. Properties for sale or lease

BLK	LOT		AREA[1](m^2)	MODE
A1	1	corner	3,843	SALE
A2	1	corner	3,462	SALE
A2	2	interior	2,568	SALE
A2	3	interior	2,611	SALE
A2	4	interior	2,573	SALE
A2	5	corner	3,321	SALE
A3	1	corner	2,500	SALE
A3	2	interior	2,222	SALE
B4		portion	5,825	SALE OR LEASE
B7		portion	4,648	SALE OR LEASE
B5		portion	18,348	SALE OR LEASE

[1]Subject to final survey

2. Qualified bidders
   Sale: Any Filipino citizen, of legal age; any government owned or controlled corporations and any government financial institution or any public corporation, which have complied with the requirements established by PEA for this bidding.
   Lease: Any Filipino citizen, of legal age; any partnership, association or corporation, public or private of which at least 60% of the capital stock or of any interest in said capital stock belongs wholly to citizens of the Philippines and which is organized and constituted under the laws of the Philippines.
3. Interested qualified parties may obtain the Terms of Reference and Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00) in cash or Manager's/Cashier's Check starting 12 August until 20 September 2004 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Marketing Department, 7th Floor Legaspi Towers 200, Paseo de Roxas, Makati MM.
4. Required pre-qualification documents and duly accomplished Bid Documents prescribed in the Terms of Reference shall be submitted to the PEA Real Estates Bid and Awards Committee (PREBAC) on 22 September 2004 on or before 1:00 PM. Public opening of bids shall follow at 1:30 PM, of the same day..
5. For further information, inquiries may be made to the Marketing Department in the above address at telephone number 817-4711 to 13 (trunk line) and 813-7103 to 7104 (direct lines).

(Sgd.) **TEODORICO C. TAGUINOD**
General Manager/CEO

(PDI--Aug. 11, 16, 21, 26, Sept. 2 & 6, 2004)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. MMD-TRANSCO 2004-063

PD Ref. No.: PB040115-EL0007 (PB2)

1. The **NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (TRANSCO - BAC) - HEAD OFFICE**, invites local bidders/contractors to apply for eligibility who are:
   a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines; or
   d. Manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors forming themselves into a joint venture, i.e., group of two (2) or more manufacturers, suppliers and/or distributors that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract; Provided, however, That Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%); or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
2. Procurement of:

Schedule	Description	Quantity	Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
II	METER SEAL	10,000 PCS	P 375,000.00
III	METER BOX	30 PCS	P 450,000.00
IV	METER TEST	30 PCS	P 405,000.00
	TOTAL		P 1,230,000.00

3. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall be specified in the Technical Quotation Form of the Bid Documents that will be issued.
   The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be Bid is *P1,230,000.00* to be sourced from the Internal Cash Generation of TransCo.
4. The Bid Documents will be available for issuance starting **August 26, 2004 to September 21, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, National Transmission Corporation, Materials Management Division (MMD), Ground Floor, TransCo Main Bldg., Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)** per set.
5. Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **September 10, 2004, 10:00 A.M.** at the Admin Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo, Main Building, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.
6. Deadline for submission, receipt and opening of bids shall be on or before **10:00 AM of September 22, 2004** at the Admin Conference room, G/F TransCo Main Building, Power Center, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City. If the date falls on a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
7. All particulars relative to the eligibility, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations-A of R.A. 9184.
8. TransCo reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
9. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **ANTONIO G. LABAYANI**
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI – August 26 & September 2, 2004)

PNOC
The Energy Company
PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION
Bldg. I, Energy Center, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel. 840 1625 or 893-6001 Loc. 1120
Fax No. (632) 840 1619
E-mail addresses: **esanjose@pnoc-ec.com.ph or purch@pnoc-ec.com.ph**

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC) invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and if, subsequently found eligible, to submit sealed bids for the supply, and delivery of:

ONE (1) UNIT FOUR (4) DOOR SEDAN
PR NO. CM 245 604

Bid Documents shall be available for issuance starting **August 27, 2004** from PNOC EC Purchasing Section c/o **Mr. Wilfredo C. Zamora/Ms. Emeline Corona-Paule** upon payment of a non-refundable fee amounting to **three hundred pesos (Php300.00)**.

For purposes of clarification, a pre-bidding conference will be conducted on **September 10, 2:00 p.m., Manila time, at Bldg. I Conference Room** of the above stated address.

Deadline for the submission of all Eligibility Requirements wil be on **September 17, 2004, Monday, up to 4:00 P.M. at PNOC EC Purchasing Section, Building 1** of the above address. Only suppliers who are prequalified will be allowed to submit their bids.

Sealed technical and financial bids in two (2) sets shall be received by the PNOC EC Purchasing not later than **September 24, 2004, 2:00 p.m., Manila time**, at the above stated address. Late bids shall not be accepted Public opening of the technical and financial bids shall follow thereafter. Only the bids of the technically complying bidders shall be opened

The approved budget for the project, which shall be sourced from Company funds, is **PHP 660,000.00** Delivery of the vehicle to **PNOC EC, Bldg. 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila** shall be on or before October 8, 2004

PNOC EC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bids or to award to any bidder whose bid is considered the lowest calculated responsive bid.

This publication is also posted in our website at **www.pnoc-ec.com.ph** and in the DBM website at **www.procurementservices.net**

(Sgd.) ERNESTO S. SAN JOSE
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – September 2, 2004)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines

DepED

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim
Office of the Undersecretary

Telefax : 631-96-40
Direct Line: 633-93-42
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 local 2221/2007
E-Mail Address: jmluz@deped.gov.ph
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
PSD 04-08-23

The Department of Education through the Bids and Awards Committee is inviting suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Supply and Delivery of 3,500 boxes of Tabulating Stock Forms, 5 ply, size – 11" x 14 7/8", graylines with both sides perforation, 70 gsm for the 1st sheet and 56 gsm for the 2nd to 5th sheets. The approved budget for the supply and delivery shall be P2,362,500.00.

All interested suppliers may avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Hundred Pesos (P300.00) starting **August 26 – September 10, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 112-A, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Pasig City or visit the DepEd Website at *http://www.deped.gov.ph.*

A pre-bid conference will be held on **September 2, 2004,** 2:00 p.m. at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Bldg. 1, DepEd Complex, Pasig City. The deadline for the submission and opening of bids shall be on **September 14, 2004** at the same time and place mentioned above.

DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids. DepEd-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary
Chairman, DepEd-BAC

(PDI–Aug. 26 & Sept. 2, 2004)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, Philippines

DepED

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim
Office of the Undersecretary

Telefax : 631-96-40
Direct Line: 633-93-42
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 local 2221/2007
E-Mail Address: jmluz@deped.gov.ph
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Education through the Bids and Awards Committee is inviting all security printers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following packages:

Package	Description	Approved Budget
1	• Printing, Packaging and Labeling of PEPT Test Booklets • Delivery of Test Booklets, Answer Sheets and Non-Classified Materials • Retrieval of Test Booklets and Answer Sheets	P 3,000,000.00
2	Printing and Delivery of Non-Classified Materials	P 100,000.00

All interested printers may avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Hundred Pesos (P300.00) starting **August 26 – September 10, 2004** at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 112-A, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Pasig City or visit the DepEd Website at *http://www.deped.gov.ph.*

A pre-bid conference will be held on **September 2, 2004, 10:00 AM** at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Bldg. 1, DepEd Complex, Pasig City. The deadline for the submission and opening of bids shall be on **September 14, 2004** at the same time and place mentioned above.

DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids. DepEd-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary
Chairman, DepEd-BAC

(PDI–Aug. 26 & Sept. 2, 2004)

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DR. RICARDO FLORENDO SEBASTIAN

Peacefully joined his Creator on Friday, August 27, 2004 in Daly City, California at the age of 89.

His loving wife **Concepcion "Conchita" Dalupan Sebastian**; children **Raul & Marleene Tolentino, Cynthia, Carol Ann** and **Francesco Goretti, Christine & Barry Kirby, Carmela** and **Noel Manahan, Ramon, Cathy & Javi Oledan, Cecile & Wade Nobuhara, Corinna & Kit Albert** and **Rocky**; 16 grandchildren; sister **Yolanda Nepomuceno**; sister-in-law **Cornelia Sebastian** and other relatives request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

A funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, September 4 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Andrews Catholic Church in Daly City, CA.

IN LOVING MEMORY
ON THE SIXTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF

ANTONIO ZARAGOZA LIM

March 11, 1937 – September 3, 1998

Tony's widow, Mariquita Bautista-Lim; children Tom, Louie, Missy and Jason Brodowski, and Bob; granddaughters Skye and Riley; sister Eva Lim Pasagui and her family; Mariquita's siblings Mely, Dodie and Warren Willis, Laly, Ted and Nina and Manolo Quiray, and their families request relatives, friends and the kind reader to attend Mass or say a prayer for the eternal repose of Tony's soul.

SCHEDULE OF MASSES ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2004

St. Anthony's Cathedral *Masbate, Masbate*	6:15 a.m.
Church of the Resurrection *BF Homes, Parañaque City*	6:30 a.m.
Our Lady of Lourdes Church *Arlington, Virginia*	6:45 a.m.
St. Timothy's Church *Chantilly, Virginia*	9:00 a.m.
St. Jerome Emiliani Church *Alabang Town Center, Muntinlupa City*	12:15 p.m.
Ateneo Professional School Chapel *Rockwell Center, Makati City*	6:00 p.m.
St. Benedict College Chapel *Alabang Hills, Muntinlupa City*	6:30 p.m.
Transfiguration of Our Lord Church *Murphy, Quezon City*	7:00 p.m.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

DR. LEOPOLDO A. UICHANCO, JR.

(May 30, 1927 – July 25, 2004)

would like to express our deep gratitude to our relatives and friends who offered prayers, masses, messages of sympathy, sent flowers, mass cards or donations, spent their precious time with us, attended the funeral rites and expressed in many other ways their love, concern and support during our time of bereavement.

Please continue to remember him through your prayers.

DOLORES 'Loling' ROSALES vda. de CRISOLOGO

of Bucay, Abra
November 25, 1911 – August 31, 2004

Survived by her children: **Gly** and **Rudy Castillo; Thelma** and **Francis Marcos; Mellie; Dante** and **Nenita Crisologo;** grandchildren **Roni; Jing & Fred; Butch & Jason; Charisse & Andrew; Karen & Percy; Kathlene & Ogie; Kharess; Kristine; Gerald & Anna; Amiel & Ira** and great grandchildren.

Her body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City with Mass at 10:00 a.m. before the 12:00 noon cremation on Friday, September 3, 2004.

Our Dearly Beloved Mommy

Anicia (Necie) Garcia Canseco

Peacefully joined our Lord on August 28, 2004 in Buffalo, New York, at the age of 71.

Her loving husband **Adring**; children **Ronnie & Lucy, Bobby & Cecille; Ben & Judy; Bessie & Dave; Ato & Loudette** and **Bep & Jinky**; grandchildren, brothers, sisters, in-laws and relatives request the reader to join them in praying for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains will lie in state at the Sta. Rita Parish, Philam Quezon City on Saturday, the 4th of September.

Interment will be on Tuesday the 7th of September at the Himlayang Pilipino after the 9 AM Mass of the Resurrection.

"Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil;
for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff that give me courage." **Psalm 23:4**

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May you forever be happy and at peace
wherever God is, wherever life's meaning is known,
wherever death's pain is healed.

In Loving Memory of

KRISTINA AMELIA P. RODIL

April 20, 1973 – September 2, 2003

On her First Death Anniversary, we wish to honor **BUNNY** through offerings of the Holy Mass at the following:

Ateneo de Davao University Chapel, Davao City	5:00 pm
Holy Rosary Parish, Cotabato City	6:00 am
Archbishop Mongeau Center, Cotabato City	6:15 am
OMI Provincial House, Cotabato City	5:00 pm
Our Lady of Immaculate Conception Church, Siasi Sulu	5:00 pm
HSBC Tower 1 The Enterprise Centre, Makati	6:00 pm
Sacred Heart, Ybardolaza, Quezon City	6:00 pm
St. Brendan Church, Los Angeles CA	8:00 am
Holy Hills Shrine, Hubertus, Wisconsin	8:00 am

In her diary, **BUNNY** wrote, *"I want to be always aware of everything, a constant reminder that I am one of God's special creations. I am deeply appreciative of this opportunity and I will live my life with strength, courage, faith and love."* And so she did, making this world a better place and leaving it a better person.

Bunny is an angel in the face of a family, a friend and a well-meaning stranger...tirelessly looking after everyone she loved and perpetually reaching out to those she deemed less-fortunate. It is no wonder then that she was given the greater honor of watching over us from a better place with a better view, beside her Maker.

We wish to thank all our relatives and friends, here and abroad, whose prayers and sympathies eased the pain and the sadness of our loss. Her memory will forever remain in the hearts of those whose lives she touched...though her voice is quiet, her spirit echoes still.

"I wait the time when we can soar together again...until then, live your life to the fullest. And when you need me, just whisper my name in your heart...I will be there."

MAMA ISABEL, ATE GLENDA,
nephews ANJO, LORENZO & ENRICO

ZENAIDA BRAGANZA ARENAS

*Has joined her husband **Atty. Napoleon A. Arenas, Sr.** and peacefully rests in the eternal presence of our Lord on August 29, 2004 at the age of 73.*

Her loving children:
Engr. Alfred B. Arenas and wife **Chona Lualhati-Arenas.** Grandchildren: **Aviel Claude, Georgia Ann** and **Alfred Gerald.**

Atty. Napoleon B. Arenas Jr. and wife **Geraldine Layug-Arenas.** Grandchildren: **Justine Marie and Christine Marie.**

Dr. Alexis Mary Arenas-Chuson and husband **Narciso C. Chuson, Jr.** Grandchildren: **Adam Clarence, Adam Chino** and **Zerinea Clare.**

Her remains lie in state at their residence located at Corner Burgos-Bonifacio Sts., Dagupan City.

Interment will be on September 5, 2004 at the Eternal Garden Memorial Park, Dagupan City immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Mass at the Eternal Garden's Chapel.

Augusto Lim Ramos

Retired Employee - Bank of the Philippine Islands

Peacefully joined the Lord on 30 August 2004 at the age of 76.

His bereaved wife **Ma. Paz (Pacita) Villa**; children **Lito** and **Norma, Cecil**; grandchildren **Justin, James, John Paul,** and **Ann Jenneth; Rey** and other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be announced later.

Please omit flowers.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord" 2 Corinthians 5:8

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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First Pacific expanding telecom business in Asia

FIRST Pacific Co. Ltd. is expanding its telecom business in the region through ongoing efforts of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. to tap the more than 8 million Filipinos working overseas as primary market.

First Pacific managing director and PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan said his group was now looking at three ways to expand the telecom business in the region. PLDT is 24 percent owned by First Pacific.

"One is to invest in a telecom company by putting in equity. Another strategy is to do it the way we did in Hong Kong where we tied up with another carrier to bring the wireless services of a subsidiary. Another option is to simply focus on retail by selling prepaid cards," said Pangilinan in a recent talk with reporters in Hong Kong.

Pangilinan said the 8 million Filipinos working overseas could be a big market for the integrated services of the PLDT group's fixed-line and international gateway, wireless and data operations.

"We hope to capture the majority of the business from the 8 million Filipinos overseas. We started with Hong Kong and we will be bringing the same products to other areas where there are Filipino communities," said the PLDT chair.

Among the markets being considered, according to Al Panlilio, president of PLDT Global, are the United States, Middle East and Europe.

PLDT Global launched 1528 Smart last Sunday in Hong Kong. Panlilio said this would allow Filipinos in Hong Kong to send text messages to their families and friends in the Philippines for only 50 HK cents per message, instead of 80 HK cents to HK$1.

Of the 180,000 Filipinos working in Hong Kong, 12,000 have already bought Smart SIM to gain access to the services of Smart Communications Inc.

PLDT tied up with Hong Kong carrier CSL for the 1528 Smart product.

The 8 million Filipinos abroad send close to $8 billion in remittances to the Philippines yearly. Pangilinan said Smart Padala would like to have a big chunk of this remittance business.

"We have given a mandate to negotiate with the carriers of other countries for a similar arrangement. The first thing to do is to find out if the regulation permits it," said Pangilinan.

He said a similar arrangement could be allowed in Singapore and Italy.

"It doesn't make sense anymore to invest equity in a market like Hong Kong, where there are already too many established players in such a small market. I think PLDT's strategy makes sense," said the PLDT chair.

But in other areas where First Pacific could expand, Pangilinan said putting in equity was still an option. He said any investment in a regional telecom company may involve PLDT.

He earlier said making additional equity investments in PLDT is one of several alternatives in growing First Pacific's business in the region.

First Pacific acquired its stake in PLDT in 1998 through a controversial buy-in. PLDT shareholders include NTT of Japan that has about 15 percent.

First Pacific had been holding exploratory talks with acquisition targets in the region. In April, Pangilinan went to Bangkok to look into the potential of TA Orange, Thailand's third largest cellular phone company.

During the first quarter, he talked about plans to buy into Excolcomindo Pratama, Indonesia's third-largest mobile operator. Telekomindo Primabhakti, which owns 60 percent of the company, reportedly wants to exit.

RP seen as potential health care hub

THE EUROPEAN Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines said it was exploring the possibility of making the country a prime health care destination in the world.

At the same time, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said a foreign investor was planning to put up a $100-million facility that would cater to the health care needs of tourists.

Last May, he said Sanyo Emeritus Corp. of Japan was looking at the possibility of putting up a retirement village in Tagaytay City for Japanese citizens.

Yesterday, ECCP's executive vice president said rising costs, overburdened public health care systems and an aging population in developed countries had created a need to outsource health care to developing countries.

Henry Schumacher said health care costs in developing countries were just a fraction of what were being charged in developed countries. He said that the quality of medical care resources in developing countries were rising to meet global standards.

"Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore currently lead in this field," Schumacher said. "In 2003 alone, these countries attracted more than 600,000 patients and generated some $500 million in revenue."

He said the potential market for the Philippines included Filipino immigrants and overseas workers, and patients from the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan, as well as those from China, the Middle East, Korea and Taiwan.

However, Schumacher said the country must first address its image problems on health and hygiene, as well as the peace and order situation.

"(There is also) a need to accredit Philippine hospitals with public health care systems in the US, Europe and Japan, and with private sector health insurance providers." *Ronnel W. Domingo*

RP construction, furniture firms seek bigger market in ME

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL furniture makers and construction firms are setting their sights on a bigger piece of the Middle Eastern market by joining this year's Index, the biggest industry event in Asia.

Held yearly at the Dubai International Exhibition Center, the 14th Index Exhibition is expected to host 26,000 trade visitors from about 50 countries worldwide.

The Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions reported that eight local companies engaged in furniture and home accessories manufacturing and three firms engaged in building materials production would be exhibiting their wares in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said in a statement: "We are excited to position our export-quality products and service in time for the large-scale infrastructure and construction development happening in that region."

Dubai's construction sector has shown rapid growth in the last three years, with 1,142 projects completed in the first half of 2002 alone.

Major projects including an extension of the Dubai airport and various tourist facilities have been lined up in the coastal city, which is touted as a strategic gateway to a market of a billion people.

Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima had called on industry players to work on becoming a dominant player in the world market through continued innovation and competitive pricing.

Government data show that furniture exports continue to show promising growth. Last year's furniture exports amounted to $278 million. The country's biggest export markets for furniture are the United States, Japan, France, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom and Australia.

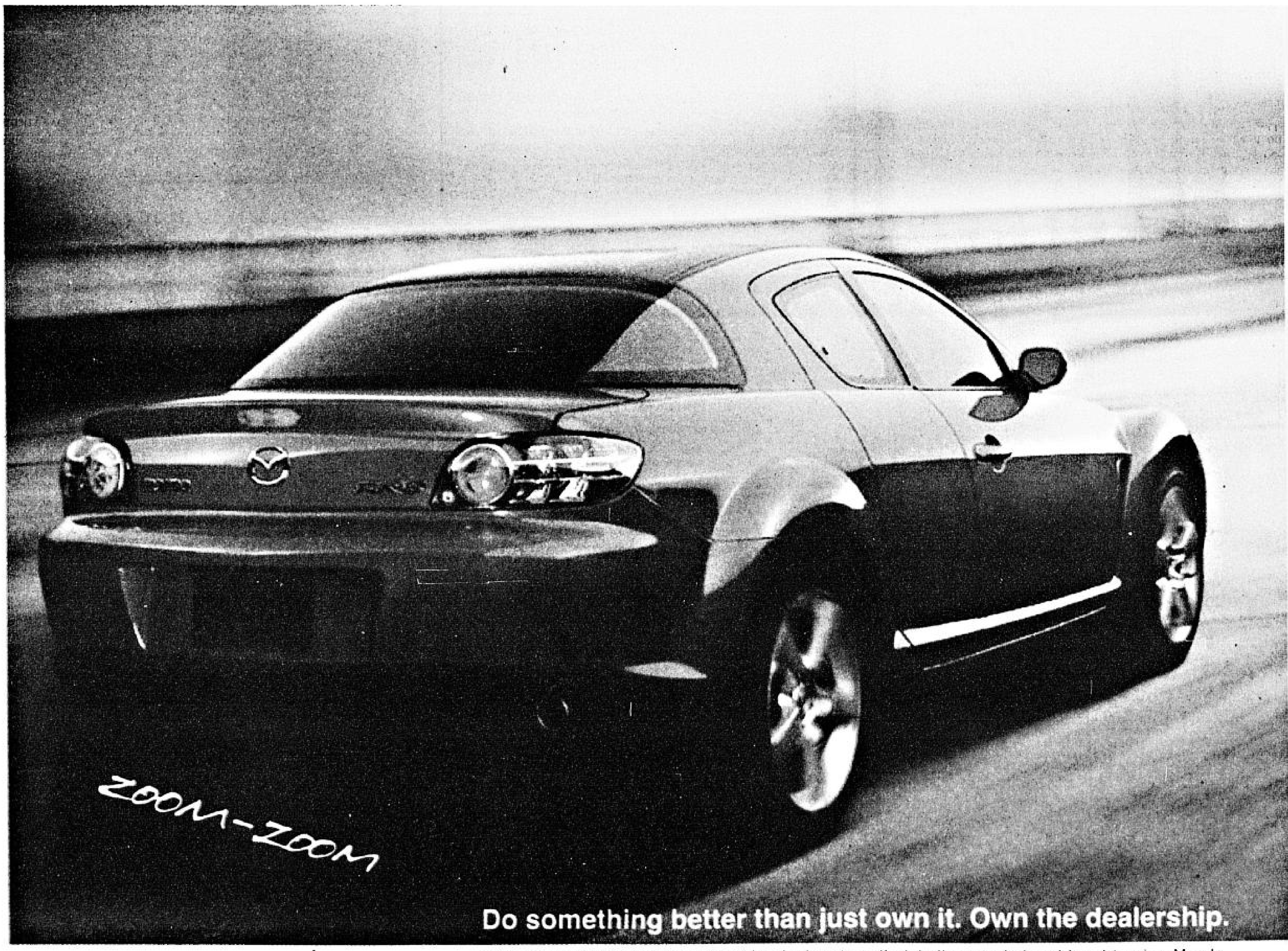
The construction industry's export business reached $184.7 million in 2003, up by 2.8 percent from $179.6 million in 2002.

According to the DTI, last year's construction export receipts surpassed the agency's target of $178 million.

Purisima had said that while local furniture makers were recognized for their craftsmanship and design, the industry was facing stiff competition from neighboring countries like China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Taiwan.

"Although our industry has made tremendous progress over the years, this is not enough because we hardly made a dent on the world market," the official said.

The DTI cited world industry figures showing that Philippine exports accounted for only 0.2 percent of world furniture demand.



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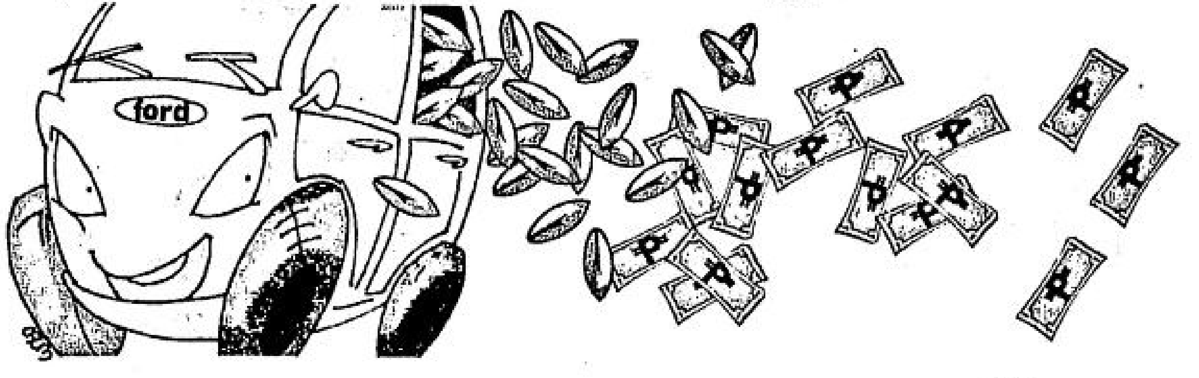
Automaker gives RP 'green signal'



By Tessa R. Salazar

GOING "green" is fashionable these days—even for car manufacturers.

But Ford Motor Co. isn't just your ordinary car manufacturer, as far as thinking "green" goes. For a carmaker that has been giving conservation awards since 1983 and has been receiving 22,000 project applications involving more than 120,000 people and organizations in 60 countries throughout Europe, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East, green isn't just a pretty color, it's the sign of survival.

It's also the color of money—money that would be used to fund worthwhile environment and conservation projects. One of the world's largest environmental and conservation grant schemes—the Ford Motor Company Conservation and Environmental Grants—offers $1,000,000 spread out over

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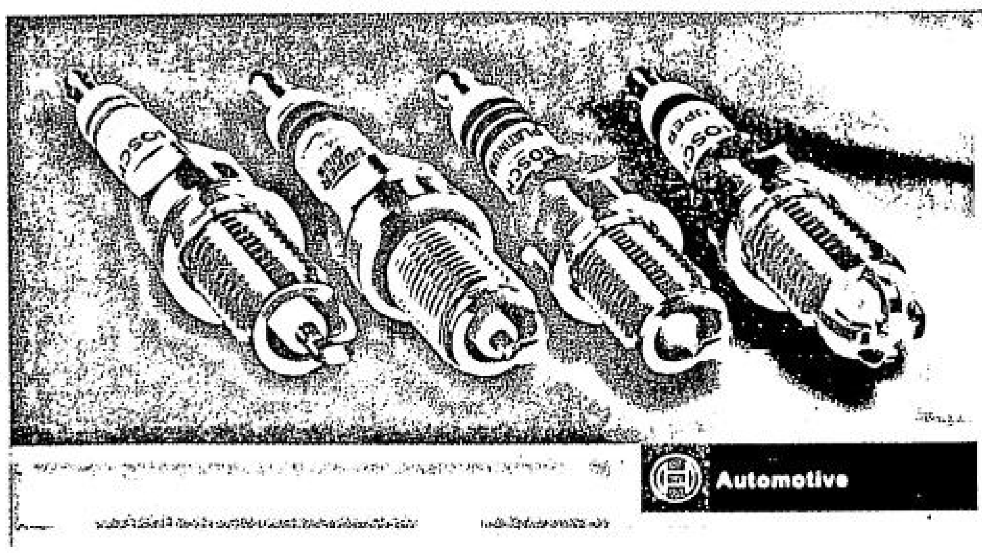

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The little devil that could spring a surprise

Text by Tessa R. Salazar
Photos by Alex P. Loinaz

IT'S small. It's a hatchback. But this little Johnny hates jazz. Pardon the pun, but take serious note: this devil of a hatchback would rather go solo than play jazz duet with a more popular hatchback. For this dude, it's better to be an unknown and spring a surprise or two than be a superstar with the weight of the world's expectations cramped up your tight little rear (of the hatchback, that is).

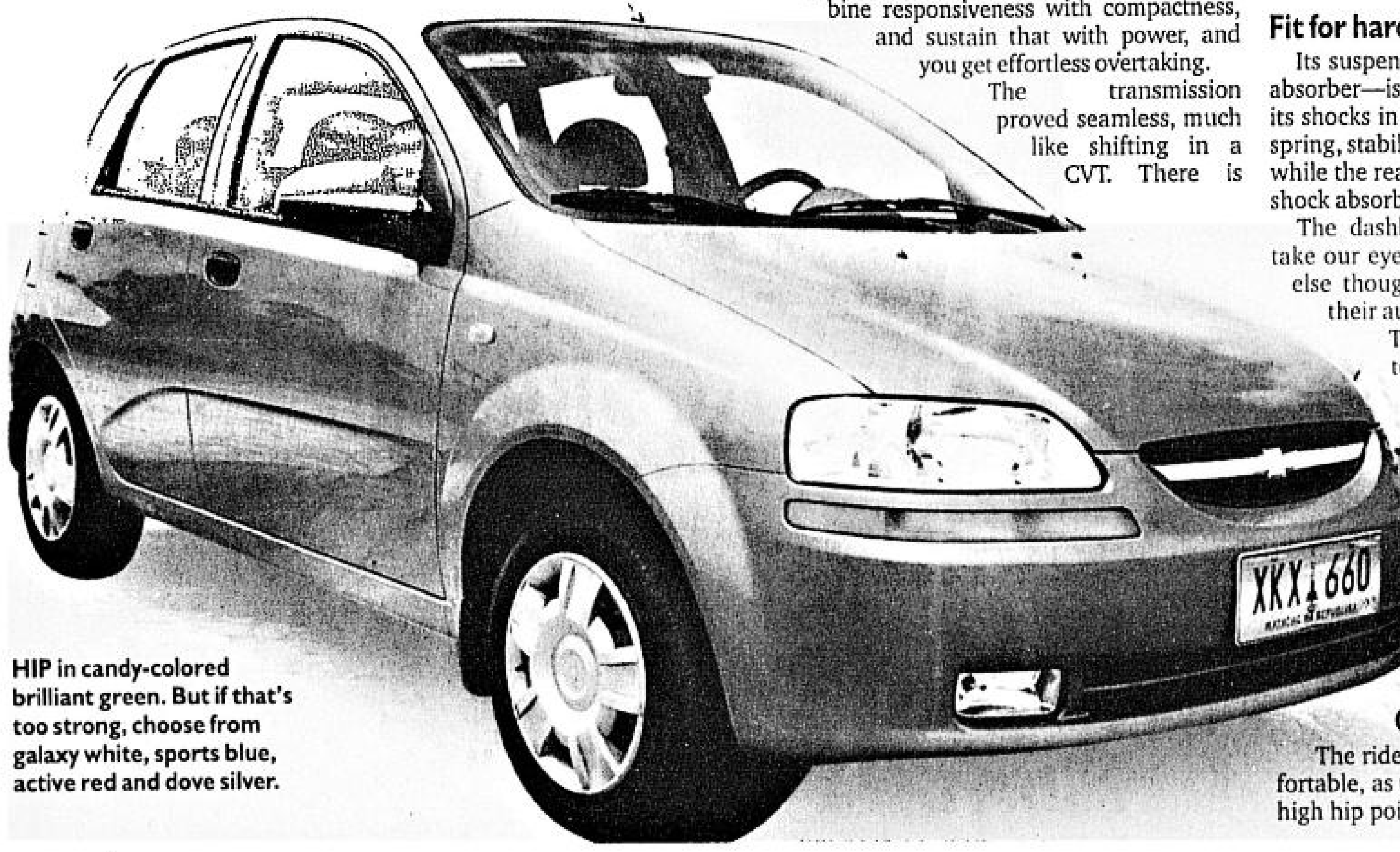
So, enough of the intro, set the sax aside, and welcome the clean-cut design of a Giogietto Guigiaro original direct from Korea.

Tiny, candy-colored car

Meet the Chevy Aveo, a tiny, candy-colored car—well, brilliant green was our designated unit—and another pesky addition to our already clogged, flooded highways...Not!

The 2004 five-door Aveo 1.5LT hatch packs a punch with its 1.5-liter double overhead cam inline engine and a fantastic automatic transmission. This, no doubt, proved a beautiful power combination and sprang a surprise even to powerful sedans on the highways. Combine responsiveness with compactness, and sustain that with power, and you get effortless overtaking.

The transmission proved seamless, much like shifting in a CVT. There is power on demand, yet the surging is minimal, and engine noise becomes bothersome only after 5,000 rpm. Yep, these Koreans have done their homework, and maybe have done even better than their teachers (we dare say "Japanese" with bated breath).



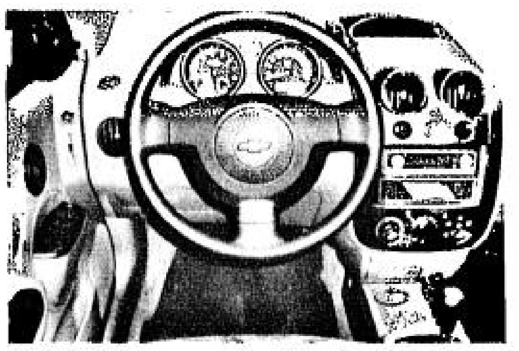
HIP in candy-colored brilliant green. But if that's too strong, choose from galaxy white, sports blue, active red and dove silver.

For a 1500 hatchback, sometimes we think it drives even better than the Vios or the City. While the Jazz's engine displacement of 1339cc, the Aveo has, indeed, the edge in power.

The power-to-weight ratio is average (with a weight of 995kg), a maximum speed of 170 kph, and goes from 0 to 100 kph in just 11.9 seconds (manufacturer's measurement).

Fit for hard driving

Its suspension—particularly the gas shock absorber—is fit for hard driving. Specifically, its shocks in front are McPherson Struts, coil spring, stabilizer bar and gas shock absorbers, while the rear has torsion beam axle with gas shock absorbers.



THE DASH is gorgeous. Though a chore to clean, the effect is good; and gone is the glare.

The dashboard is gorgeous, and doesn't take our eyes away from the road. And who else thought of adding an MP3 player in their audio arsenal?

The side-view mirror controls are too practical, though. The one on the right is controlled electrically, but on the driver's side it's back to manual stick control.

The tray in front of the back passenger is a thoughtful addition, but if forgotten to fold out when unused can injure the passenger in a vehicular accident.

Comfortable ride

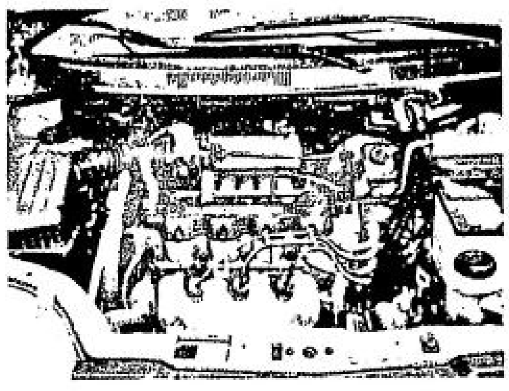
The ride, particularly at the back, is comfortable, as the seats here are elevated. It has high hip point seats for easy entry and exit, a feature that also reduces fatigue and improves all-around visibility. The trunk is fantastically large (198 liters, and with rear seat folded 1,189 liters)—looking small on the outside but big on the inside. The trunk opens high enough so that even six-footers won't bump their heads while getting their stuff at the back.

IT'S magic! Small car, big trunk.

The Aveo measures 3,880 mm in length, 1,670 mm in width and 1,495 mm in height, and has a wheelbase of 2,480 mm with a minimum turning radius of 4.98 m. The wheel/tires measure 185/60R14. Compare these dimensions to Honda Jazz's overall length of 3,830 mm; overall width of 1,695 mm; overall height of 1,525 mm; wheelbase of 2,450mm.

There's just one thing, though. The honk is like a squeak of a trike. Not much of a growl from a little devil.

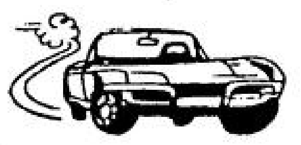
Verdict: The car is a real surprise. The Aveo is a "sleeper" of a car in performance. It was built well, but of course, before it was built, it was designed well. The result: a beautiful ride. Too bad we couldn't bring our extended families along for the drive. For P545,000 (manual transmission) and P599,000 (automatic transmission), though, we wouldn't mind leaving them behind. They can have the van all they want.



THIS little devil sings solo and a cappella.

A surprise from Honda; Isuzu charity

FULL TANK



Al Mendoza

IT is called "the powerful new Honda Civic."

Truly, it is.

You want power in a sedan that is a "mere" 2.0, you have it with the new Honda Civic.

I have always believed that since it crashed into the car scene some quarter of a century ago, Honda has not stopped amazing the motoring industry.

Billed as "the sedan that continues to set the pace of progress and grow in longtime global popularity," the new Honda Civic 2.0 i-VTEC has trespassed the boundaries of what a real car in its class is: superpowerful and yet supereconomical in its fuel consumption. I have yet to find a sedan like this whose power is such that you ask yourself afterward: Is this all that this car has consumed from its tank after I have literally abused its engine power?

When Tintin Reyes sent me a text message that read like this: "Will a 2.0 like the Honda Civic suit you fine?" I said to myself, "Wow! What's that supposed to mean?"

This sedan is advanced in almost every way. Its intelligent DOHC i-VTEC 2.0-liter engine with an effortless 5AT shifting unites revolutionary Honda VTEC and VTC innovations. It has a three-pronged feature that makes you want to drive it all day long: exuberant power, high fuel economy and low emissions. This 2.0-liter Civic features a 155 ps @ 6,500 rpm and an 18.0 kgm @ 5,000 rpm. And its 5-speed automatic gear shifting with an active lockup makes for freedom from driving stress. It is so effortlessly manageable you wouldn't want someone to drive it for you, even if it's Michael Schumacher himself offering the driving chores for you.

And consider its interior: Sporty black décor, a black leather-bound steering wheel, metallic mesh center panel and meter panel with red illumination give the cockpit a stylist look. And yes, Honda has reinforced its safety features to stringent global standards. This 2.0-liter Civic now has the G-Force Control technology that helps absorb collision impact, providing a hard shell of "survival zone" shielding. This is, of course, in addition to two steel beams in each door, plus dual SRS airbags alongside seatbelts to provide supplementary head and torso protection in the event of a strong frontal collision. A three-year, 100,000-km warranty awaits every buyer, too.

Yes, TinTin, please tell Arnel Doria and Min Magbag they've just collaborated in giving the car world another ride worth the car buff's while.

Alleluia!

* * *

Why the government continues to allow the auction of imported secondhand vehicles in Subic remains a puzzle to vehicle manufacturers in the country, including the major players.

Well, there's a law that allows it, if not a presidential fiat.

But then, do you know that the automotive industry, particularly its main lifeline such as the acknowledged leaders of carmakers, suffers big losses arising from it? Can't we find a remedial law to finally curb this malady afflicting the automotive business?

As you know, with some 50,000 vehicles sold in Subic annually, tons of money in uncollected taxes are lost to the detriment of the government.

And yes, do you know that for those 50,000 or so vehicles sold in Subic, thousands of jobs are also lost?

I'm sure the government knows this. Why it continues to ignore this malady is a question not hard to answer.

Again, can't GMA step in and finally put an end to this parody? And I thought she was looking for remedies to lick her self-proclaimed fiscal crisis?

* * *

Just recently, Isuzu has done some business that earned no money but instead, a ton of social consciousness and civic charity.

By observing its 7th year in the country, Isuzu donated two classroom buildings to the Biñan National High School in Laguna.

What a gesture, indeed.

Said Isuzu president Yoshifumi Komura during the program: "Today's young generation is our future's treasure and hope. We see the importance and value of an education that will help our country grow and produce citizens who will contribute to the success of our nation."

Actually, this marked only the second year that Isuzu has come up with a socio-civic activity that directly benefited the citizenry of Laguna. Last year, the Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) was the recipient of 10,000 tilapia fingerlings from Isuzu. Also, Isuzu donated a garbage trap located at Barangays Macabling and Tagapo in Sta. Rosa as one of the tributary rivers of the Laguna Lake.

Komura was assisted in this year's turnover ceremonies by IPC's executive vice president Kazuhiko Sho, with Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas, Biñan Mayor Hermis Perez and Laguna school official Lilia Reyes.

After the program, Isuzu goodies and precious gifts were distributed by IPC vice president Arthur Balmadrid and marketing communications head Myrna Gonzales to Biñan students.

* * *

CONDOLENCES. My condolences go to the loved ones of Bobby Olaya of Calauag, Quezon, who passed away on Aug. 27. His remains will be interred today (Sept. 2) in Calauag. Bobby, a much-respected school supervisor, was a dear friend of mine who holds the rare distinction of having fathered two sons as Roman Catholic priests. I saw Bobby last in June, when he and his wife, Trudis, hosted dinner for Dante and Ching Fernandez, Ate Luisa, Ate Coring, Sol Juvida and me at their residence in Calauag. You will be missed, Bobby. May God have mercy on your soul.

* * *

QUOTE ME. When driving, don't smoke, even if you're alone in the car. Like "texting," smoking can also distract your concentration.

Castrol Ambi Pur team scores in Beijing AF3 race

CASTROL AMBI PUR Team Goddard drivers Mark Goddard of the UK and China's Mars Hsieh, sponsored by Castrol, Ambi Pur Car, Speedzone, Supercar Club of Hong Kong, advanced in the championship standings of the Asian Formula 3 Series after delivering a win and solid podium finishes in Rounds 5 and 6 of the series, which were held last weekend at the Goldenport Circuit in Beijing, China.

The 2002 AF3 champion Goddard finished third in Round 5 behind race winner John O'Hara of Ireland and second placer Australian Christian Jones to herald his return to the podium after a disastrous outing three months ago in Subic Bay where car problems robbed him of certain points.

First place

In Round 6, Goddard finished second on the road but was awarded first place following a first lap prang between Jones, the series leader, and the hard driving O'Hara which put the Australian out of the race. The Irishman managed to continue with Goddard giving chase.

The Manila-based Englishman, however, could not pull up close enough to pass as O'Hara's car was spewing oil, which obscured Goddard's vision. "Oil was all over the car and on my visor. I tried to pull off my tear-off but it was stuck. I had to drive off the racing line several times which cost me time," Goddard recounted.

O'Hara went on to take the checkered flag but was meted out a 1-minute penalty that dropped him down to sixth in the results and gave Goddard his first AF3 victory since last year's race at the Bira Circuit in Thailand. "That's not the way to win but I take it as a sign that our luck is changing at last," said Goddard after the race. He is now third in the drivers championship behind Jones and O'Hara.

Finishing second

Hsieh, meanwhile, driving in his first-ever F3 race and sitting in for Filipino Tyson Sy, who competed in the Formula BMW race, finished second in the Promotions class for pre-1998 F3 cars and a first in the newly organized China Driver Class in Round Five.

In Round 6, Hsieh finished third overall, first in Promotions and first in the China Drivers class but was disqualified by race officials following a bizarre incident involving Filipinos Enzo Pastor and Roland Hermoso.

During the race, Pastor spun and stopped in the middle of the track as Hermoso and Hsieh arrived at the scene at full speed. Seeing Pastor reversing back onto the track, Hermoso spun to avoid hitting him and was struck from behind by Hsieh. Pastor restarted without any problems, Hermoso retired on the spot, while Hsieh was pushed by marshals to the side of the road where he was able to restart on his own—an act which officials ruled as outside assistance. An appeal was lodged but was subsequently rejected.

Mitsubishi awards Adventure GLX, Hong Kong trips to promo winners

MITSUBISHI Motors Philippines recently awarded to Efren Dimailig, the grand prize winner of the Mitsubishi Lancer and Adventure Launch Overdrive promo, a brand-new 2004 Adventure GLX Gas model.

Dimailig, a resident of Lipa City, Batangas, was truly grateful when he was informed by SFM Sales Corp., Mitsubishi Motors Philippines' dealer at Lipa City, that he won the grand prize. He bought a 2004 Adventure Grandsport diesel model and opted for another Adventure as his prize since he said his family will benefit more than getting a passenger car.

Other winnners

Meanwhile, Ma. Lordeliza Mandapat and Eleonor T. Vase, both residents of Pangasinan, won a trip to Hong Kong for three days and two nights. Mandapat bought an Adventure GLX diesel while Eleanor Vase bought an Adventure Grandsport diesel at Motorplaza Inc., which is MMPC's dealer at the north.

Minor prizes such as Rudy Project belt bags, Nintendo game boys, Microsoft X-box game consoles, Casio Digital Camera, Apple I-pods, Nokia mobile phones, and Shinco Portable DVD players were awarded separately by the respective dealers. The official list of winners will be advertised soon by MMPC.

In addition to the raffle promo, Mitsubishi Motors Philippines awarded the Lancer Art Car Contest winners. There were at least 31 finalists from the numerous entries which were received nationwide. From this contest, two sets of top three winners from the two age groups were decided.

Automaker gives RP 'green signal'

From page C1

50 participating countries.

Financial support

Filipinos involved in a local project to protect the natural environment or to preserve the country's cultural heritage stand to get financial support. Ford Group Philippines is scouting for individuals or organizations focused on such projects "in a noteworthy manner."

Concerned organizations, take note: if your project/s fall under the categories Natural Environment, Heritage, Conservation Engineering, Child and Youth Projects, then grab an entry form at any Ford Motor Co. dealership.

The funding has no deadline. Last year, the five projects that received almost P2 million were an advocacy for the conservation and management of the Ligawasan Marsh (Maguindanaoan Development Foundation Inc.); a project mobilizing children for earth-friendly parenting (Children for Breastfeeding); another project championing coral reef preservation and propagation (Institute of Social Order); the establishment of a scientific garden in the La Mesa Biodiversity and Nature Park (Bantay Kalikasan); and an environment education training and national conference (Center for Environmental Awareness and Education).

Some P10 million in grant money have been awarded to 31 local projects in the span of five years since the program was introduced in the country.

Fifth year

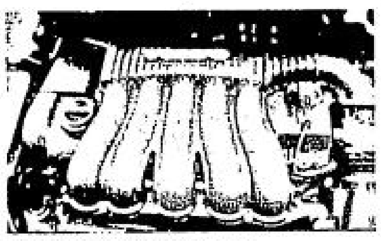
This year, Ford Motor is observing the start of the fifth year of the Ford Conservation and Environment Grants in Southeast Asia. It was first introduced in Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia in 2000. It expanded to include Indonesia and Cambodia in 2002. It has awarded more than $1.12 million to some 235 projects for the protection of the environment, conservation of nonrenewable resources, and the preservation of valuable aspects of national or traditional culture and heritage within local communities in the Asean.

Volvo's upstart

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THE 2004 VOLVO S40 is an upstart challenging market leaders in the compact executive car class. Offered as Volvo's small, entry-level, lowest-priced (P1,895,000) car, it nevertheless packs all the core strengths of larger, costlier Volvo models and may thus lure buyers from the compact exec market.

All-new from the ground up, the '04 S40 showcases the elegance, driving pleasure, comfort, safety and state-of-the-art technology that Volvo is famous for. Its compact but sleek, flowing lines, V-shaped hood, rakishly angled windshields, broad shoulders and sculpted rear section project an athletic yet refined image, somewhat like the Audi A4, but still definitely a Volvo.



VOLVO S40's torquey transverse-mounted 2.4-liter DOHC 5-cylinder engine.

Torquey

Its transverse-mounted, naturally aspirated 2.4-liter, 5 cylinders-in-line, DOHC engine mated to a 5-speed Geartronic transmission develops 170 bhp at 6,000 rpm and 230 Nm at 2,200-4,400 rpm max torque, which with variable inlet valve timing translates into swift acceleration and high torque from low engine revs Volvo claims that the 2.4 S40 sprints from zero to 100 km/hr in 8.9 seconds and has a top speed of 215 km/hr. On the Skyway, it reached a respectable 180 km/h.

A wider, longer chassis, independent suspension all around with spring struts up front and a multilink system at the rear plus stabilizer bars front and rear combine with a 68 percent improvement in torsional rigidity to provide solid straight-line stability at highway speeds and impressive grip with minimal body roll on the twisties. Although the S40 is categorized as a small car, its ride quality, handling and comfort approach that of the bigger Volvos, making it eminently eligible for long-distance motoring. In fact, it runs more quietly than the S60 and S80 with less wind noise and road rumble even when you floor the gas pedal.

Center stack

Inside, the S40's most attractive feature is a slim aluminum center stack that flows gracefully from the instrument panel into the gear shift housing, a minimalistic but elegant Scandinavian design that creates an ambience of space and airiness in the compact car's cabin. The top half of the center stack is where you operate the audio (tuner with in-dash CD and six speakers) system although there are also remote control buttons on the steering wheel for the audio. The lower half has the dual-zone electronic climate control switchgear. A rubber-matted storage compartment for small items is hidden behind the center stack but is not that easy to reach from either side.

By scrolling the tip of the turn indicator stalk on the left of the steering column, you can activate the trip computer and read your average speed, your current and average fuel consumption and how many kilometers to go before the fuel tank empties. The driver's seat is power-adjustable with memory and the 3-spoke leather steering wheel can be adjusted, too. The front seats are very comfortable with adequate shoulder and thigh support and the rear seat backrest splits 60/40 to enlarge cargo space. The front passenger seat's backrest can be folded flat to carry long cargo.

The S40 is 48 mm shorter than its predecessor, but it is 54 mm wider and thus roomier inside with two inches added to the rear seat legroom. Although there are enough cupholders (two up front and two in the rear armrest) and the center fliptop box between the front seats can accommodate a dozen CDs, the door pockets are rather narrow and hemmed in by big loudspeakers. Aside from the storage compartment behind the center stack, the S40 does not have cubbyholes for your small stuff. And when you back up the S40, your rear view is blocked by the tall middle headrest of the rear seat.

Aces

But when it comes to safety features, the S40 aces. In terms of frontal collision protection, the S40 with its new, patented front structure, engine bay packaging, combination of four different grades of steel and reengineered collapsible steering column puts it on a par with the S80, one of the safest cars in the world. Inside, the S40 has the same high standard of safety as larger Volvo models with dual front airbags, inflatable curtains, SIPS (side impact protection system), SIPS airbags, 3-point pretensioner seatbelts for all five seats, WHIPS (whiplash protection system), anti-submarining design on all seat and remote central locking with alarm system and engine immobilizer. The brakes on the 16-inch alloy wheels have 4-channel ABS with EBD and EBA (Emergency Brake Assist) and STC (stability traction control) anti-spin system is standard equipment. Idis (intelligent driver information system), influenced by fighter aircraft technology, delays less important information in traffic situations that require the driver's full concentration.

Summing up, the S40 may cost about P200,000 more than other five-seater family sedans, but its sporty elegance, high-quality cabin kit, solid build, proven 5-cylinder engine (also used in the S60 and S80), advanced technology and array of safety features combined with its superb handling and quiet and comfy ride justify the higher price tag.

* * *

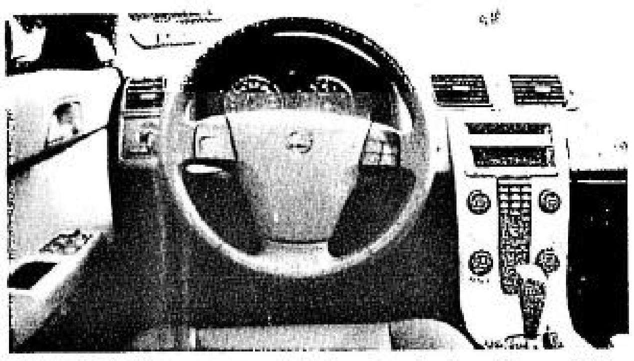
TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: A fool and his money are a girl's best friend.

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA

DEFINITELY A VOLVO: the S40's egg crate grill, V-shaped hood and projector-type headlights



ULTRA-SLIM center stack fusing the dash and gear shift housing blends Volvo styling with the latest contemporary Scandinavian minimalism.

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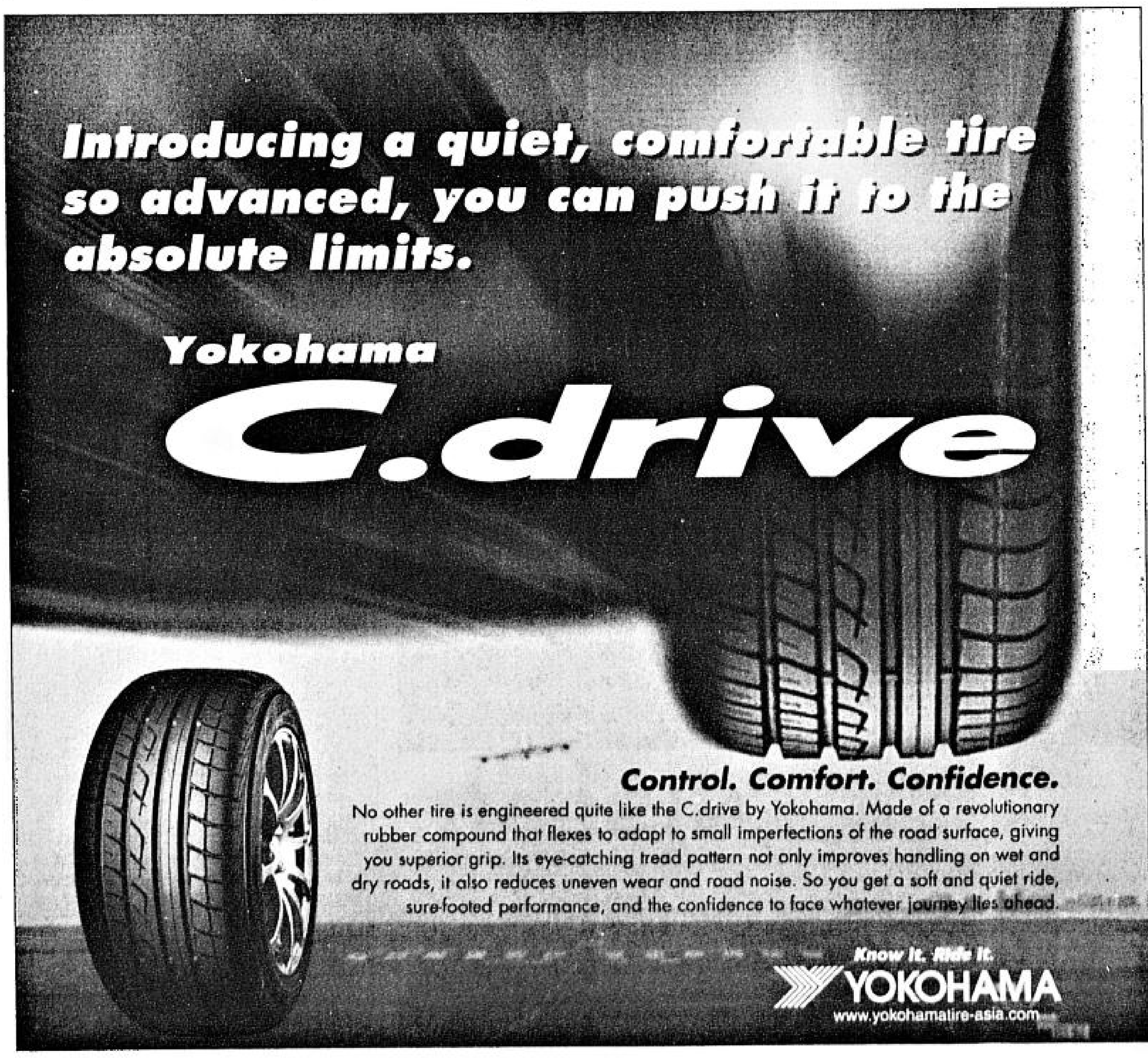
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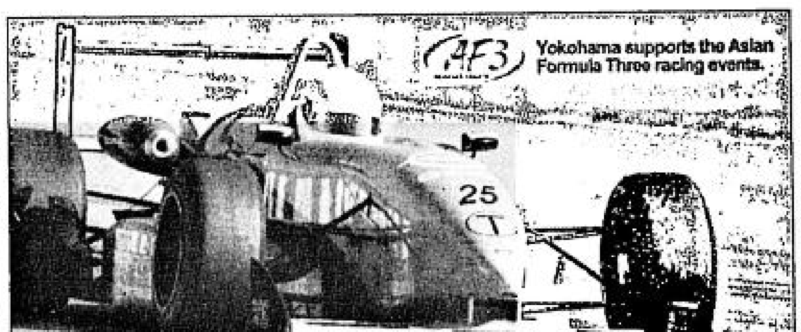

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Isuzu showcases new generation buses, trucks

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

AT ONE point in our commuting lives, we must have been tired of riding noisy, smelly, smoke-belching and sometimes sluggish buses.

But we have no choice for they dominate our roads and highways while the better—but very few—ones ply the provincial roads.

Last week, Isuzu Philippines Corp. gave us a reason to hope. Its "Truck Attack" exhibit at the World Trade Center in Pasay City, showcased truck products that would answer every Filipino business' logistical requirement.

From next generation buses to the flexible heavy-duty and light-duty trucks, IPC displayed for three days a total of 27 bus and truck models plus product displays from business partners Almazora, Ample Air, Carryboy, Centro, Denso, Multi-Lift, Philippine Aluminum Wheels Inc., Pinnacle, Pioneer, 3M and Trans Orient.

THE VERSATILE Isuzu N-Series can be turned into almost any make, like this mini fire truck.

ISUZU'S version of the G-liner bus makes for an elegant transportation

Reinforcing Isuzu's presence

"We believe that the time is ripe for us to reinforce Isuzu's presence in trucks and buses categories, the domain wherein Isuzu has earned global distinction in terms of technology and product development," announced IPC vice president for marketing and sales Ken Takashima during the formal opening program.

Isuzu, which produced 86,354 trucks last year, became the world's largest truck maker for the first time in six years, up from third place in 2002.

"Isuzu's reinstatement at the top position after six years since 1997 could probably be attributed to the company's relentless effort to make sure that our products are durable, fuel-efficient, environment-friendly and at the same time powerful, flexible and easy to maintain," said Isuzu Motors Ltd. (Japan) executive officer Ryozo Tsukioka who attended the exhibit's opening.

Bus models introduced

For the first time, Isuzu introduced its LV and LT bus models as its answer to the country's need for a world-class mode of mass transportation.

"This is IPC's way of contributing to the safety and comfort of the riding public, and more especially, to the environment," said IPC vice president for fleet sales, parts and services Arthur Balmadrid.

Apart from being esthetically pleasing, both bus models are equipped with timing injection rate control system (TICS), which assures high-pressure fuel injection and improved torque in the low-speed range as well as a finer spray of fuel that mixes more easily with air (resulting in the powerful, fuel-efficient, low-emission engine).

What's more, both bus models are compliant to Euro 2 emissions standards.

The Isuzu LV model is powered by a 9.8-liter 6SD1 turbo-charged (with intercooler) diesel engine that generates as much as 324.4 PS of power and maximum torque of 120 kg-m.

The LT model, on the other hand, is powered by a 7.1-liter 6HE1 tubo-charged (with inter-cooler) diesel engine that delivers 233.2 PS of power and maximum torque of 68 kg-m.

Other trucks presented

Apart from the bus models, the World Trade exhibit also featured other Isuzu truck models.

The Isuzu passenger van (IPV) is an ideal multipurpose vehicle for budding entrepreneurs and big companies alike, for both passengers and cargo.

"Using the reliable and sturdy Isuzu Fuego platform, the IPV can be configured to suit any needs," informed Balmadrid.

Another truck model displayed at the "Truck Attack" was the Isuzu's N-series light-duty trucks, the No. 1 light-duty truck in the world.

Euro I compliant

Nicknamed the Isuzu Elf, the N-series is known for its rugged reliability, elegant styling and what's more it's Euro 1 emission standard compliant.

Balmadrid said the N-series' wide range of body applications include a walk-thru van, a mini fire truck, reefer van, garbage arm-roll vehicle, a passenger van and a 4x4 model.

The medium- to heavy-duty Isuzu F-series (or the Isuzu Forward) was the most versatile and ultimate workhorse among the Isuzu Truck Attack displays.

Offering durability, power and low-emission performance, the F-series is a perfect partner for hauling and other construction-related businesses.

Said Balmadrid: "Through the 'Truck Attack,' we want to inform the public that Isuzu has redefined how trucks should be—powerful, reliable, durable and easy to maintain. What's more, through Isuzu's research and development these trucks are now powered with superior performance diesel engines with excellent fuel economy rating and low emissions."

Isuzu signs MOA with AAP

ISUZU Philippines Corp. (IPC) recently signed a memorandum of agreement with Automobile Association Philippines at the Isuzu offices in Laguna.

Buyers of new Isuzu vehicles such as the Crosswind, Fuego, D-Max and Trooper from Sept. 1 onward will be given free AAP associate membership, which entitles the customer to free emergency roadside service that includes 24-hour towing service, roadside breakdown assistance, flat battery and home start service, lockout assistance and provision of enough fuel to reach the next service station in case the customer runs out of fuel.

Customers can also upgrade their membership to AAP personal membership through participating Isuzu dealerships to avail of the full range of services the AAP offers.

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Nissan Frontier III 4x2 A/T (Elite) 3.2AT	960,000	192,000.00	152,000.00	10,582.00	20%	50%
Nissan Patrol 4x4 A/T Gas	2,425,000	485,000.00	405,000.00	27,231.00	50%	
Nissan Patrol 4x4 A/T Diesel	2,335,000	467,000.00	387,000.00	26,150.00	50%	
Nissan Patrol 4x4 M/T Diesel	2,240,000	448,000.00	368,000.00	25,008.00	50%	
Nissan Urvan Escapade	990,000	198,000.00	158,000.00	10,943.00	20%	50%
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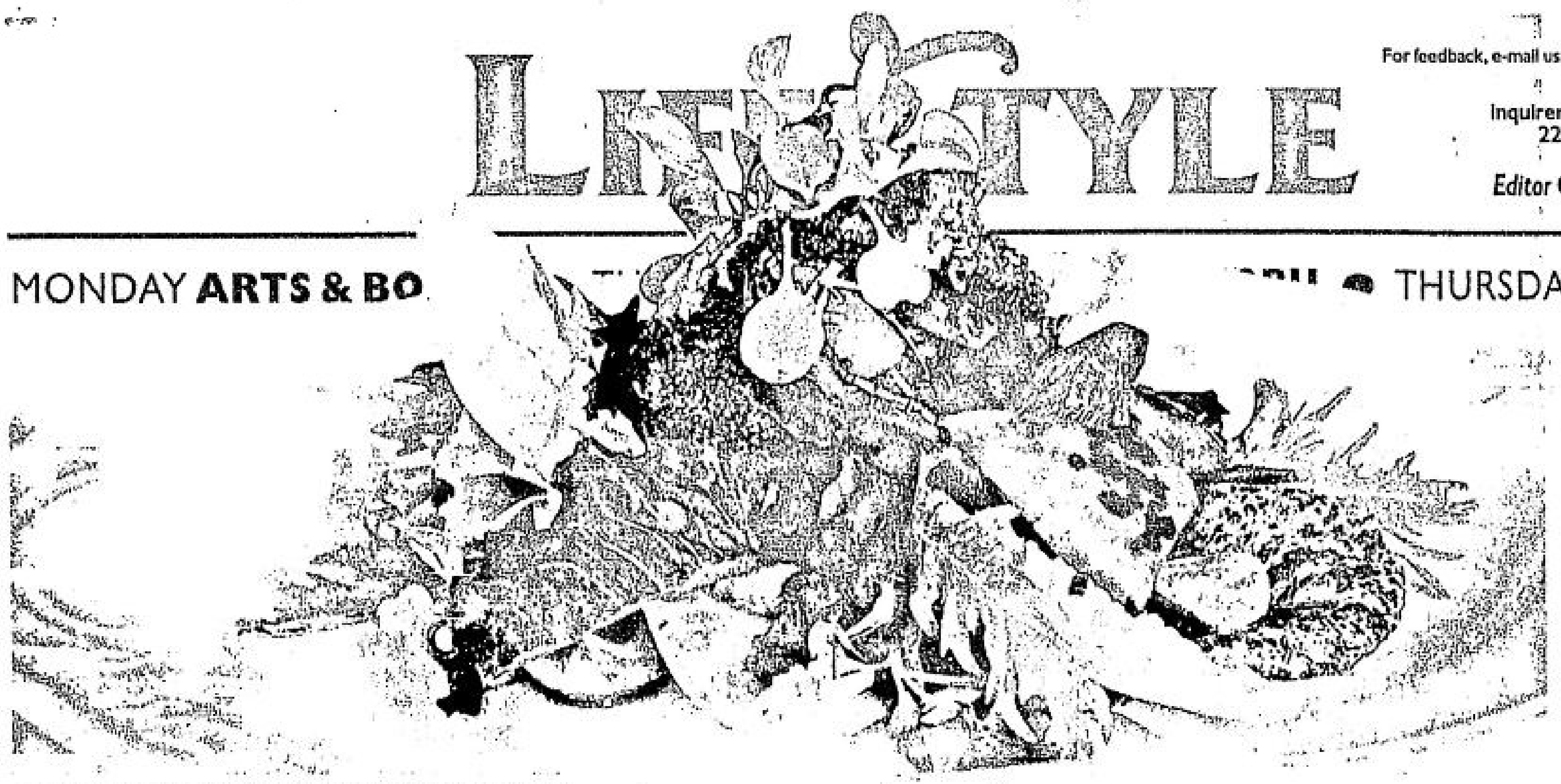
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso



MEDITERRANEAN Salad consists of grilled veggies, such as zucchini, broccoli, eggplant, tomatoes and asparagus in olive oil and lemon vinaigrette.

If what's stopping you from going the South Beach way is all the diet-unfriendly food you get at home or in restaurants, Le Soufflé has the answer

SBD meals to go

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

WITH more and more people swearing by the effectiveness of the South Beach Diet, the newest weight-loss craze to hit the town, one restaurant is helping would-be converts get into the bandwagon, as well as making it easy for believers to stick to the food regimen.

Le Soufflé in Ortigas Center launched recently its special South Beach Diet (SBD) menu, which is carefully created and prepared by its owner-chef Jessie Sincioco and Florabel Co, executive chef of Top of the Citi, Le Souffle's sister company.

Le Souffle's SBD menu features dishes that strictly follow the guidelines set by renowned American cardiologist Dr. Arthur Agatston, who developed the food program in his book.

"We know how popular this diet is these days," says Sincioco. "We... read the book and found it (the diet) sensible and doable, so we decided to come up with a specialized menu for those who (might) have a hard time following the recipes in the book. It's like we're doing all the work for them."

In principle, SBD is a healthy, easy and effective but natural and tasteful way to lose weight. It is based on the premise that simple carbohydrates are killers and, for good health, one has to control his/her blood sugar level.

Like Dr. Agatston, Le Soufflé (tels. 6361613, 6361614 and 6348945) believes one doesn't have to give up delicious meals to lose weight. Case in point is Co, who has succeeded in losing weight after following the SBD for three months while still managing to whip up tasty dishes.

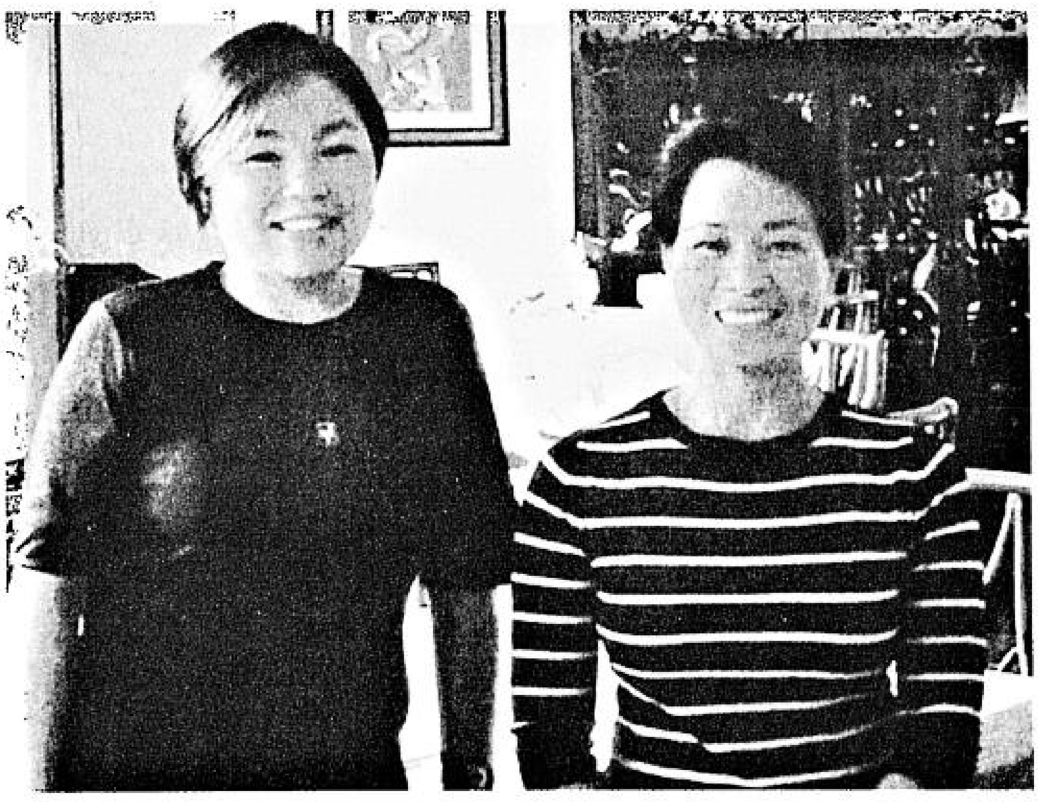
Living proof

Co first read the SBD book in May. Having been on the chubby side since she was young, she has tried all sorts of diets, including Atkins, Fit for Life, and Scarsdale. "But there was no consistency (in the results). I lost some and gained some," she admits.

And then came SBD. "I find SBD very logical," says the 31-year-old Co. "It simply relies on eating the right carbohydrates and fats. When you eat bad carbs and fats, it makes you hungrier, making you eat more, which eventually causes weight gain. SBD totally made sense to me."

Co carefully studied the SBD menu and began cooking her own SBD meals. To date, she has lost about 22 pounds and continues to lose weight. Her waistline is down from 35 to 29. "I feel lighter and better than ever," she swears.

As she slowly, but steadily, won her battle with the bulge, people began asking about her diet menu and, eventually, request her to cook for them.



GAINING IN LOSING. Florabel Co (left), Top of the Citi's executive chef, says she lost 22 pounds with the South Beach Diet and gained a number of SBD meal subscribers and diners at (right) Jessie Sincioco's Le Soufflé Bistro in Ortigas.

So Co started cooking and preparing SBD dishes.

"I researched and experimented following the guidelines, came up with my own menu because some ingredients in the SBD book are not readily available, such as low-fat ricotta, Kenya beans, French beans, Canadian bacon and fat-free yogurt," she says.

Adapted to Filipino taste

As many people know by now, SBD works in phases. The strictest phase in the diet and lasting for two weeks, Phase 1 is supposed to help you overcome your cravings for sugar, bread, rice and potatoes. Dieters could expect to lose from 8-13 pounds. The diet, says the book, helps trim the belly area first.

In Phase 2, some of the "banned" foods are slowly re-introduced, but weight loss continues. Phase 3 is for maintenance and should be followed for life.

"Not all recipes in the book will appeal to the taste of Filipinos. So, from the list of ingredients in the book, I came up with a menu that can be enjoyed by Filipinos," Co says.

"When I saw Florabel starting to lose weight after following the diet, I was convinced this program would also work for other people," says Sincioco.

Special program

Sincioco and Co currently offer a two-week SBD program that covers Phase 1 and provides food for 14 days.

Le Soufflé prepares a whole set of take-out meals (from breakfast to dinner) and two snacks for a whole day, which SBD program members can pick up at 9 every morning. The food is freshly cooked every day and packed in microwavable containers.

Sincioco has also included SBD set lunches and dinners for dine-in guests at Le Soufflé.

A sample whole-day set for both dine-in and take-out consists of Tuna Salad Nicoisse for breakfast, Vegetable Frittata for morning snack, Bangus Belly Roll with steamed lowland vegetables (okra, *sitaw, talong*, spinach) for lunch, Vegetable Quiche (afternoon snack) and Roast Turkey Breast with South Beach mashed potato and sautéed vegetables for dinner. Dessert choices include sugar-free gelatin or all-egg white meringue.

The food package for an entire day costs P1,000.

"With this kind of program, we also try to spare you from going to market, cleaning and cooking your food. We try to make it convenient to everyone," says Sincioco.

Le Soufflé and Top of the Citi expect to eventually offer Phase 2 meals "until you reach your desired weight," says Sincioco.

"If you read the book... (what it) is teaching us is how to eat right. What is important, whether you lose weight or not, is you are eating healthy," says Co.

After Co launched the SBD program in early August, about 30-40 percent of the Top of the Citi (tel. 7505810) patrons signed in. A veritable case indeed of how to lose weight and influence people.

E-mail vbaga@inquirer.com.ph.

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GRILLED Beef Tenderloin "A la Pobre"

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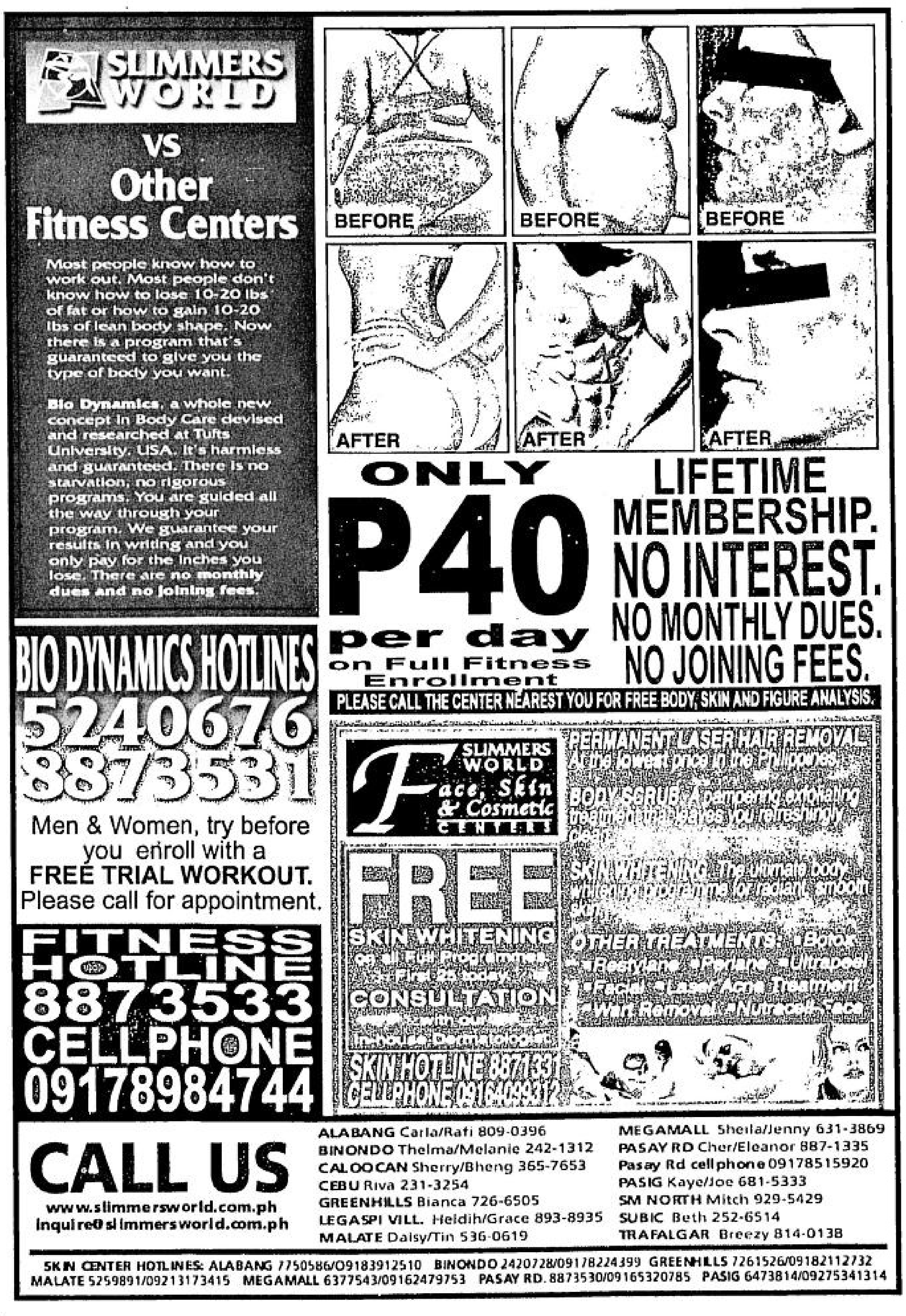

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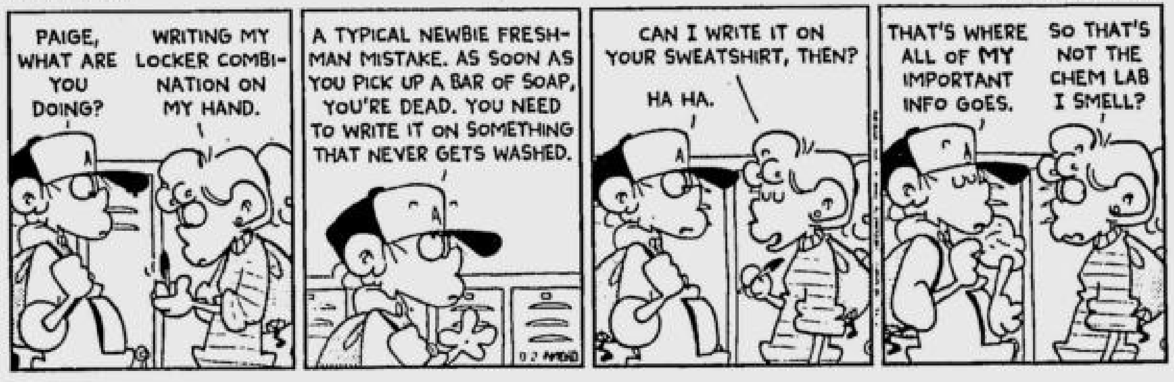
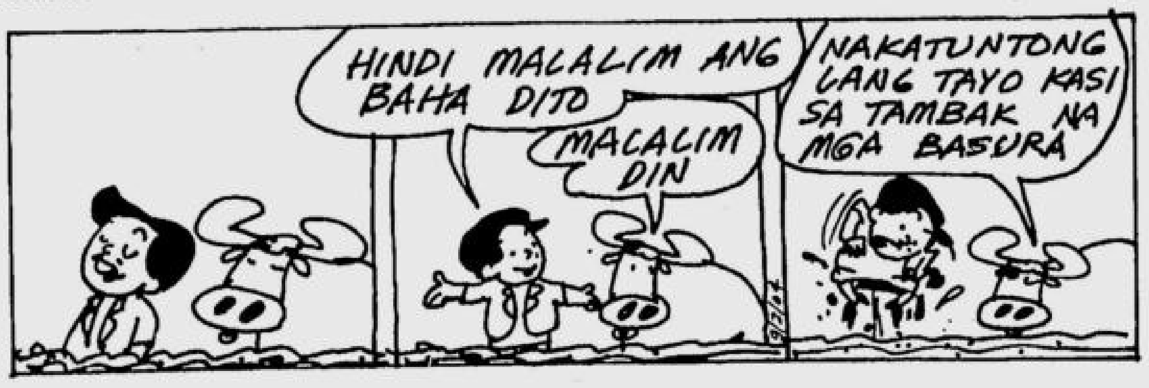
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


PAIGE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WRITING MY LOCKER COMBINATION ON MY HAND.
A TYPICAL NEWBIE FRESHMAN MISTAKE. AS SOON AS YOU PICK UP A BAR OF SOAP, YOU'RE DEAD. YOU NEED TO WRITE IT ON SOMETHING THAT NEVER GETS WASHED.
CAN I WRITE IT ON YOUR SWEATSHIRT, THEN?
HA HA.
THAT'S WHERE ALL OF MY IMPORTANT INFO GOES.
SO THAT'S NOT THE CHEM LAB I SMELL?

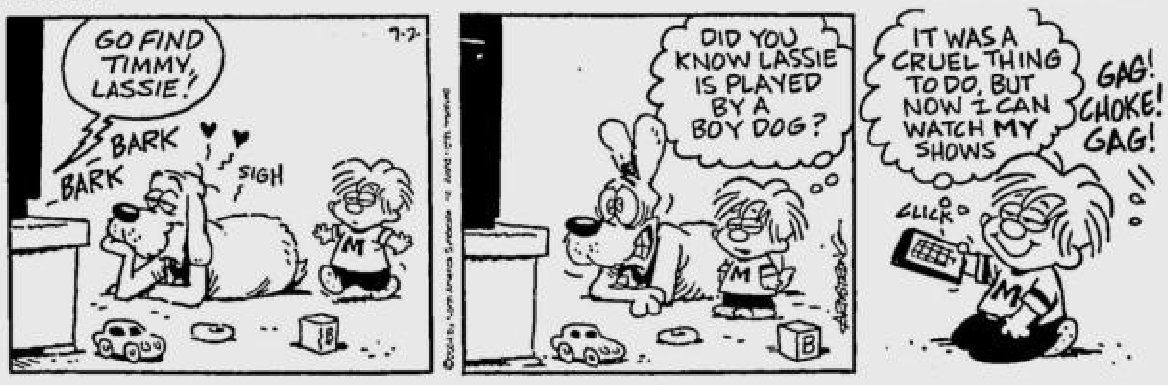
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HINDI MALALIM ANG BAHA DITO
MALALIM DIN
NAKATUNTONG LANG TAYO KASI SA TAMBAK NA MGA BASURA

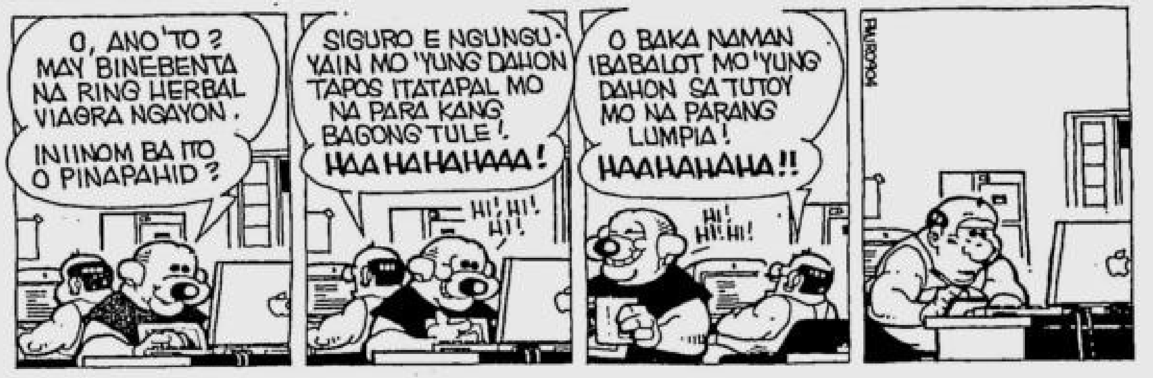
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


9-2
GO FIND TIMMY, LASSIE!
BARK
BARK
SIGH
DID YOU KNOW LASSIE IS PLAYED BY A BOY DOG?
IT WAS A CRUEL THING TO DO, BUT NOW I CAN WATCH MY SHOWS
GAG! CHOKE! GAG!
CLICK

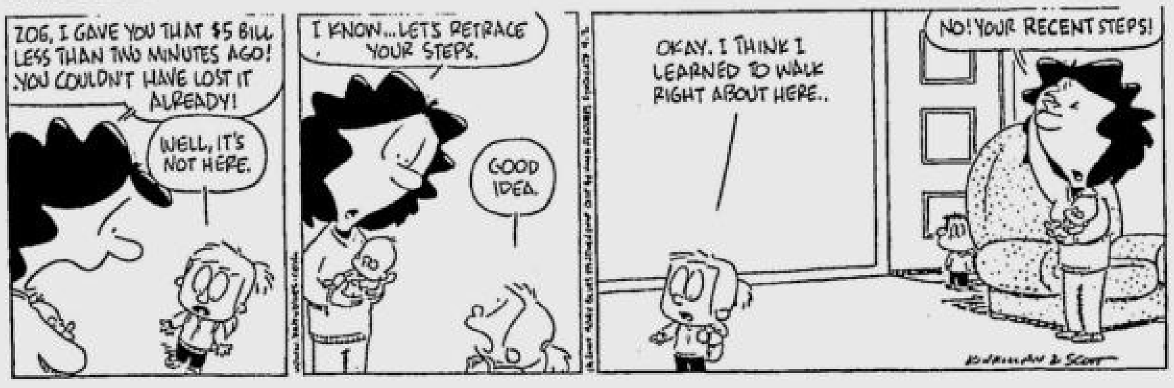
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


O, ANO 'TO? MAY BINEBENTA NA RING HERBAL VIAGRA NGAYON.
INIINOM BA ITO O PINAPAHID?
SIGURO E NGUNGUYAIN MO 'YUNG DAHON TAPOS ITATAPAL MO NA PARA KANG BAGONG TULE!
HAAHAHAHAAA!
HI! HI! HI!
O BAKA NAMAN IBABALOT MO 'YUNG DAHON SA TUTOY MO NA PARANG LUMPIA!
HAAHAHAHA!!
HI! HI! HI!

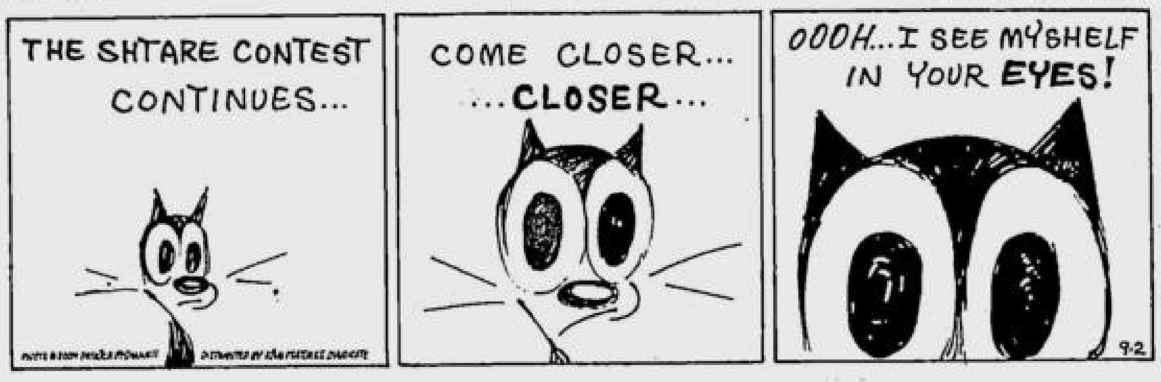
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE, I GAVE YOU THAT $5 BILL LESS THAN TWO MINUTES AGO! YOU COULDN'T HAVE LOST IT ALREADY!
WELL, IT'S NOT HERE.
I KNOW... LET'S RETRACE YOUR STEPS.
GOOD IDEA.
OKAY. I THINK I LEARNED TO WALK RIGHT ABOUT HERE..
NO! YOUR RECENT STEPS!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

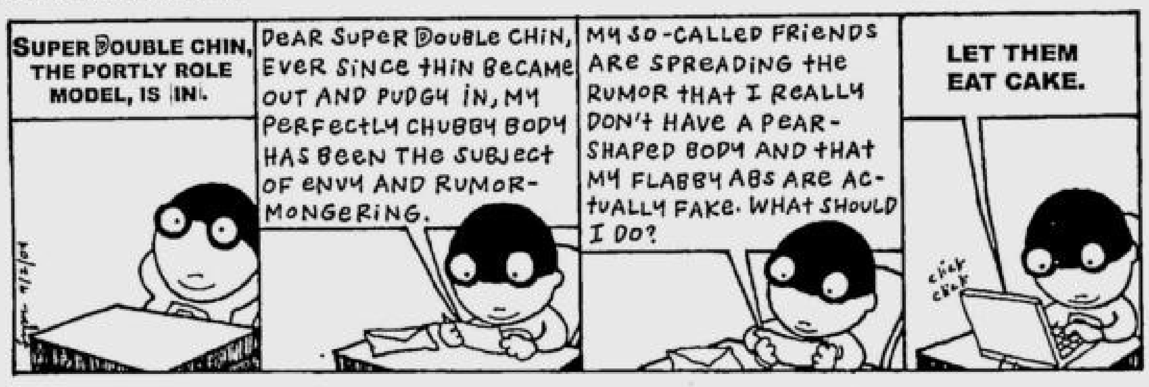
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


THE SHTARE CONTEST CONTINUES...
COME CLOSER... ...CLOSER...
OOOH... I SEE MYSHELF IN YOUR EYES!
9-2

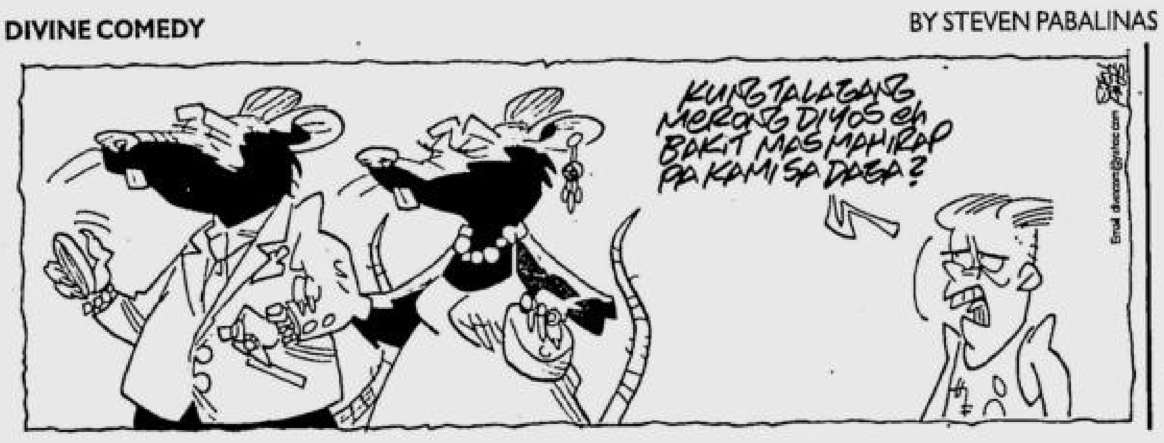
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SUPER DOUBLE CHIN, THE PORTLY ROLE MODEL, IS IN.
DEAR SUPER DOUBLE CHIN, EVER SINCE THIN BECAME OUT AND PUDGY IN, MY PERFECTLY CHUBBY BODY HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF ENVY AND RUMOR-MONGERING.
MY SO-CALLED FRIENDS ARE SPREADING THE RUMOR THAT I REALLY DON'T HAVE A PEAR-SHAPED BODY AND THAT MY FLABBY ABS ARE ACTUALLY FAKE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
LET THEM EAT CAKE.
CLICK CLICK

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


KUNG TALAGANG MERONG DIYOS EH BAKIT MAS MAHIRAP PA KAMI SA DAGA?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very honest, down-to-earth and unpretentious. You're a straight shooter. You say what you mean, and you mean what you say. Because of this, others respect you and listen to you when you speak. You're good with money. Get ready for a fabulous year—perhaps one of the best in your life.
Birthdate of: Mark Harmon, actor; Keanu Reeves, actor; Salma Hayek, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You've been embroiled with old business related to children lately. Some of you have been similarly involved in past love affairs. From here on, move forward into new territory.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Family reunions and dealing with old family matters have been a major focus lately. Now your attention can turn to domestic issues that are future-oriented.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're going to feel much better starting today. Your ruler, Mercury, now goes direct. This means it feels like your life is back on track. Yay!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your efforts to earn money (and perhaps even to spend it) will be more effective and productive starting today. Tackle your job, or your job search, with renewed vigor!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Starting today, your life will pick up with much more energy and focus. Count on getting a lot done in the next month. You're all fired up with ideas and grand plans.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Like Gemini, you're ruled by Mercury. When it goes retrograde (as it does three times a year) your life gets snarled up with delays and confused communications. As of today, all that is over.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You can now move forward with efforts to work with groups and friends. Whereas you might have been stalled in the water before, now you feel revved-up and raring to go!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Everything having to do with your professional life will become easier to manage now. Delays and confused communication are a thing of the past. Move forward with confidence.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Travel delays and canceled plans related to publishing and the media will diminish now. By contrast, your progress in these areas improves fantastically! Expect open doors all the way.

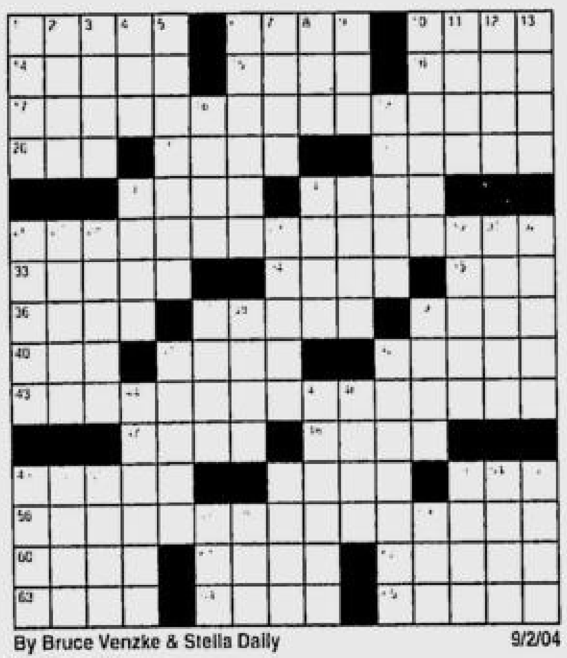
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Now you can get the cooperation you need to move forward with details about shared property. You have finally settled some important issues that needed addressing.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Many of you have run into ex-partners and old friends. Now it's time to move forward with plans for partnerships and joint efforts to accomplish things.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): The delays and confusions that you have suffered at work in the past few months will now hugely diminish. Yay! Things can return to normal.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 German sub
6 Salt Lake state
10 Wiry
14 Fish dish
15 Short letter
16 __ Stanley Gardner
17 Excuse of the uncooperative
20 Dixie grp.
21 Half-goat man
22 Fischer's forte
23 Actor Rip
24 Gillette shaver
26 Excuse of the uncooperative
33 Bay window
34 Borders
35 Pirate's drink
36 Kiddy taboo
37 Slur over
39 Act dejected
40 Bus. letter abbr.
41 All is lost!
42 Brad Pitt film
43 Excuse of the uncooperative
47 Whoppers
48 Extol
49 Go fishing
52 Waist looper
53 Tell's canton
56 Excuse of the uncooperative
60 TV award
61 Tracy Marrow on stage
62 Point of contention
63 Fling
64 Shoot wide
65 "Endymion" poet



By Bruce Venzke & Stella Daily
Madison, WI
9/2/04

DOWN
1 Leathernecks' org.
2 Purchases
3 Workplace watchdog org.
4 Eureka!
5 Aluminum wrapping
6 Lacking recognition
7 Hamlet
8 Lunched
9 One of those girls
10 Fatal
11 Buffalo's lake
12 Pub pours
13 Beatty and Buntline
18 Doggone it!
19 Beige shades
23 Van Gogh's brother
24 Corrosive stuff
25 Heavy volume
26 Song for nine voices
27 University of Maine locale
28 Color
29 Lucky people?
30 Herded
31 Plays for a fool
32 Foretokens
37 Glamour competition
38 Sets down
39 Pinochle declaration
41 Sigourney Weaver film
42 Russian headline maker of 1957
44 Brass and pewter, e.g.
45 Puts into office
46 "Le roi d'Ys" composer
49 Aid's partner
50 Nautilus captain
51 Training rooms
52 Tournament passes
53 Bear in the sky
54 Decisive defeat
55 Seine sights
57 Lacking brightness
58 1101
59 Half a fly?

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

D	A	T	A	■	J	U	L	E	P	■	S	A	T	E
E	R	A	S	■	O	P	E	R	A	■	A	D	E	N
L	I	G	H	T	Y	E	A	R	S	A	H	E	A	D
I	D	S	■	E	O	N	S	■	■	L	A	P	S	E
■	■	■	L	A	U	D	■	C	H	A	R	T	E	D
F	A	K	E	R	S	■	S	O	U	S	A	■	■	■
I	B	I	S	■	■	S	T	U	N	K	■	M	A	E
J	U	S	T	P	O	K	I	N	G	A	L	O	N	G
I	T	S	■	O	P	A	R	T	■	■	I	O	T	A
■	■	■	S	E	A	T	S	■	F	O	L	D	E	D
S	H	U	T	T	L	E	■	B	A	B	Y	■	■	■
H	E	N	R	I	■	■	A	U	T	O	■	M	A	S
I	N	B	A	C	K	O	F	T	H	E	P	A	C	K
S	C	A	L	■	O	R	A	T	E	■	A	N	T	I
H	E	R	D	■	S	E	R	E	R	■	R	E	S	T

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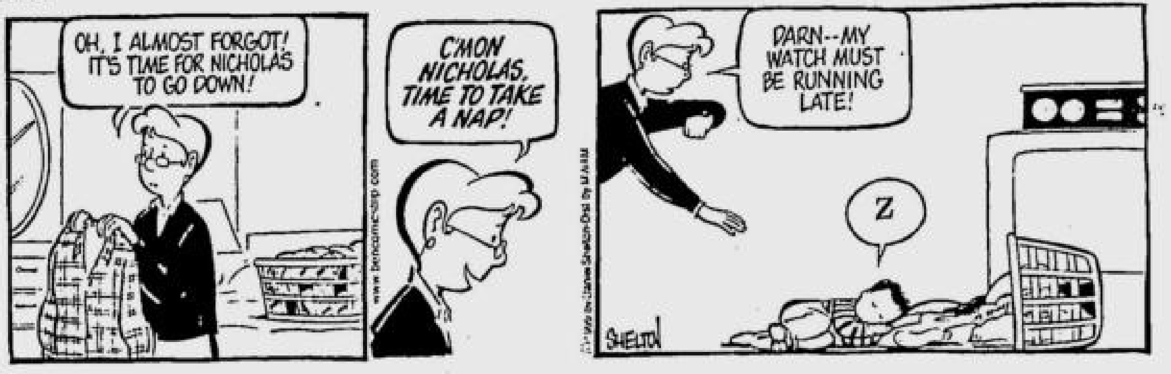
9/2/04

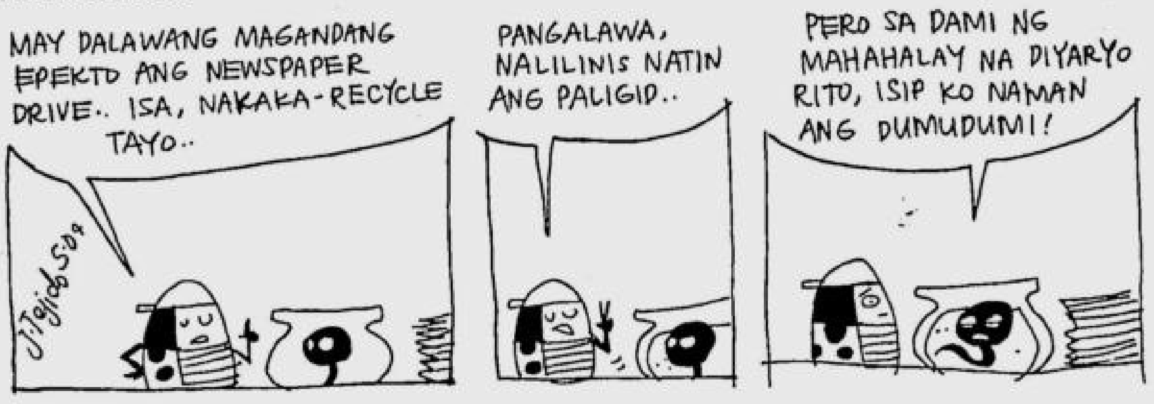
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


OH, I ALMOST FORGOT! IT'S TIME FOR NICHOLAS TO GO DOWN!
C'MON NICHOLAS. TIME TO TAKE A NAP!
DARN--MY WATCH MUST BE RUNNING LATE!
Z
SHELTON

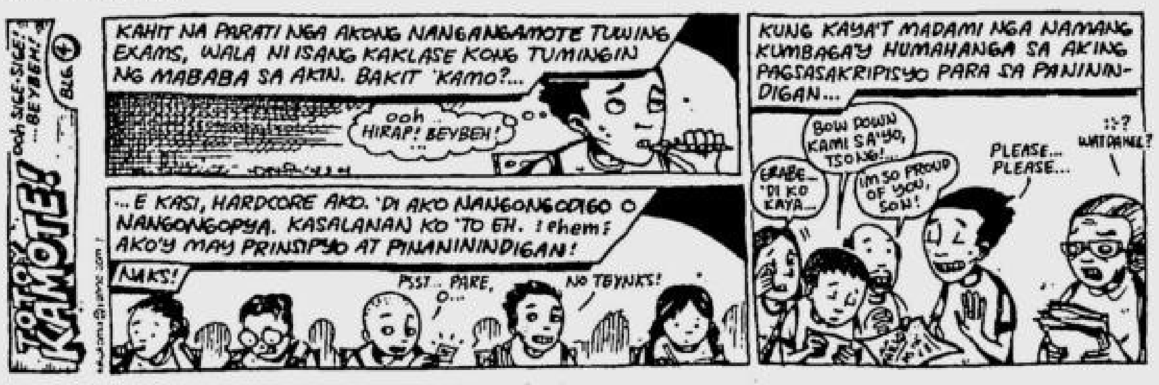
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MAY DALAWANG MAGANDANG EPEKTO ANG NEWSPAPER DRIVE.. ISA, NAKAKA-RECYCLE TAYO..
PANGALAWA, NALILINIS NATIN ANG PALIGID..
PERO SA DAMI NG MAHAHALAY NA DIYARYO RITO, ISIP KO NAMAN ANG DUMUDUMI!

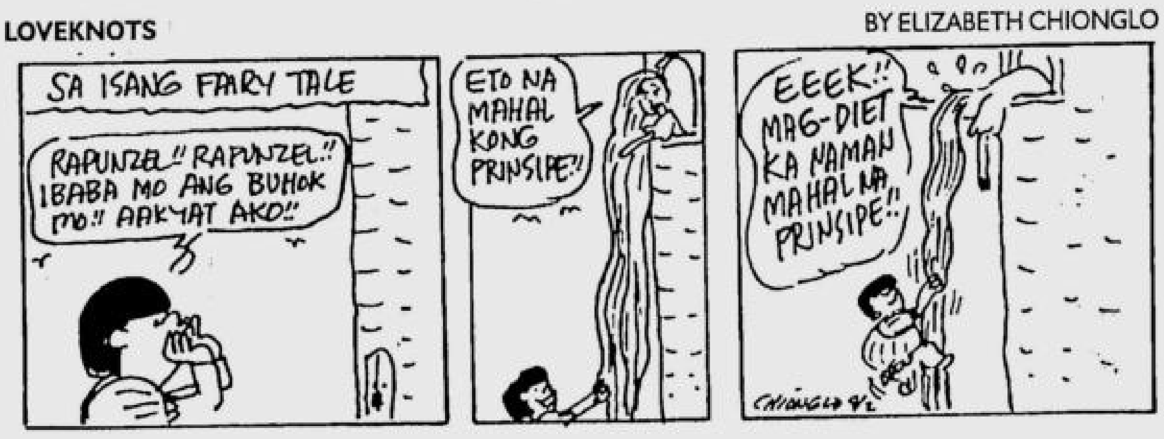
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TOTOY KAMOTE! ooh SIGE-SIGE! ...BEYBEH! BLG 4
KAHIT NA PARATI NGA AKONG NANGANGAMOTE TUWING EKAMS, WALA NI ISANG KAKLASE KONG TUMINGIN NG MABABA SA AKIN. BAKIT 'KAMO?...
ooh HIRAP! BEYBEH!
...E KASI, HARDCORE AKO. 'DI AKO NANGONGODIGO O NANGONGOPYA. KASALANAN KO 'TO EH. !ehem! AKO'Y MAY PRINSIPYO AT PINANININDIGAN!
NAKS!
PSST... PARE, O...
NO TEYNKS!
KUNG KAYA'T MADAMI NGA NAMANG KUMBAGA'Y HUMAHANGA SA AKING PAGSASAKRIPISYO PARA SA PANININDIGAN...
ERABE... 'DI KO KAYA...
BOW DOWN KAMI SA'YO, TSONG!
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU, SON!
PLEASE... PLEASE...
!:? WATDAHEL?

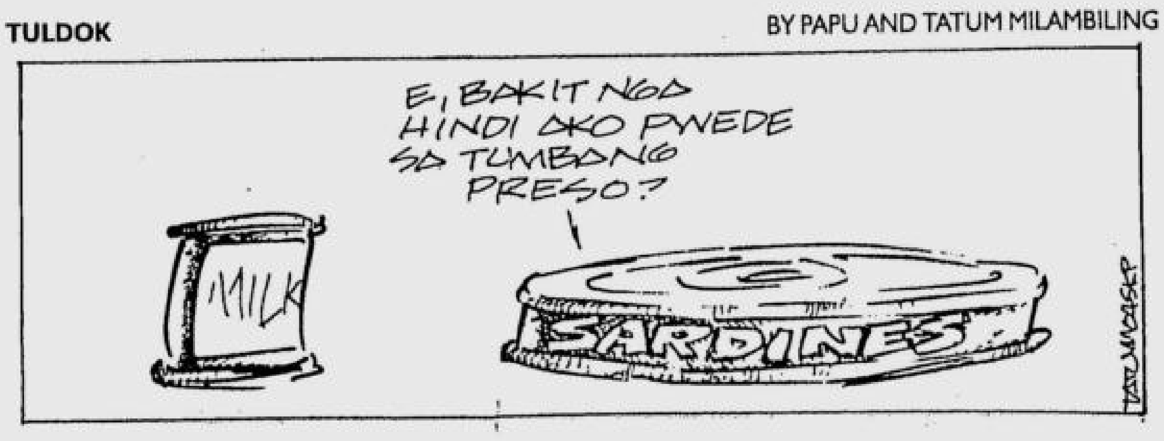
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SA ISANG FAIRY TALE
RAPUNZEL!! RAPUNZEL!! IBABA MO ANG BUHOK MO!! AAKYAT AKO!!
ETO NA MAHAL KONG PRINSIPE!!
EEEK!! MAG-DIET KA NAMAN MAHAL NA PRINSIPE!!
CHIONGLO 9/2

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


E, BAKIT NGA HINDI AKO PWEDE SA TUMBANG PRESO?
MILK
SARDINES

Travel is becoming an ordeal

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

LEGISLATORS can do consumers a big service by coming up with a bill protecting the rights of people who travel by air, land or sea concerns.

Many passengers will agree with us that air travel alone is plagued with bad service. Preflight headaches, inconvenience due to tight security measures, adverse effects of cancelled and delayed flights and pilferage of items from luggage are just some of the hassles passengers endure.

Consider our recent experience. We sat for more than three hours at the Centennial terminal of the Philippine Airlines last week as our flight to Davao was delayed. So we started making a mental note of air travel grievances sent to us by readers. We thought we could devote a whole issue on the subject.

Three days later, as ill luck would have it, we were stuck once again—at the Davao airport this time—for about four hours, waiting for the re-scheduled flight to Manila. No thanks to Philippine Airlines, instead of arriving in Manila at about 8 p.m., we got off the plane at about 10 p.m., exasperated, hungry and tired.

More complaints

Readers have sent in these gripes:

Aimee Lomarquez of Cebu has had enough of waiting for the refund on the unused PAL ticket of her mother, Helen Ramas. It is a return ticket from Los Angeles to Cebu. She wrote that the ticket was handed last February to Eagle Wings Travel and Tours Inc. In spite of constant follow-up, there's still no clear indication when she will get the refund. "How come it takes a long time to get a refund?" she asked.

We called up the travel agency and found out from a certain Anna Nomus (032-2317391) that the application for ticket refund of H. Ramas was sent for further processing to the International Association of Travel Agencies in Makati. If we understood it right from Nomus, certain transactions of IATA member agencies, including requests for refund, have to be coursed through the association.

We called up IATA (8172552) and was assured by the woman in charge, Rose Valesa, that she would attend to the matter by calling up the travel agency.

Several months ago, Singapore-based journalist Millette Manalo Burgos (kutilpa@hotmail.com) related the hassles she and her two sisters experienced on their various trips. We are sharing her story so readers may learn from the sisters' experience. Burgos, incidentally, is news editor of the Asia Pacific Broadcasting publication.

She wrote, "My youngest sister and her son were at the check-in counter in Changi airport in Singapore. Aside from having to bear the ordeal of standing in a very long line, they had to deal with the airline company's counter personnel who insisted that my sister check in the luggage she wanted to hand-carry. It was a cabin luggage that met the size requirement (and should have been) allowed to be placed on the cabin's overhead compartment. When my sister insisted, the counter person told her to ask the Changi airport staff to check if her luggage was indeed of the right size. As she expected, the Changi people declared that it met the size requirement for cabin luggage and cleared it."

Burgos' own experience with an incompetent flight stewardess is common. She related, "I asked for a blanket as it was getting cold, with the plane cruising at 30,000 ft. The stewardess said there was no more blanket, and said she would just turn down the air conditioning, whatever that meant. Only when I raised my voice did a blanket magically appear." Moral of the story: Bring a blanket or warm coat when you travel.

Consumers be warned

We will conclude the sisters' travel stories next week. In the meantime, here's a reader's warning to consumers: "When you get a call from an unknown person who says you've won a gift certificate for 3 days and 2 nights accommodation in a hotel chain, tell the caller right off that you are not interested. In our experience, the gift certificate was not free at all."

The reader added, "I made the mistake of promising the representative that I would return her call after I consulted my husband. The representative called me later and when she found out that I was no longer interested, she gave me a rude tongue-lashing and insisted that I would have to pay the company for the gift certificate since the hotel accommodation had already been booked in my name."

E-mail the author at giron@mailstation.net

Deadline for food writing contest extended

THE MANILA Ladies Branch of the International Food and Wine Society announces the extension of the deadline for the Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award 2004 to not later than 5 p.m. Sept. 10.

Theme of this year's competition, which is co-sponsored by the Slow Food Manila Covivium, is "Traditional Filipino Cooking."

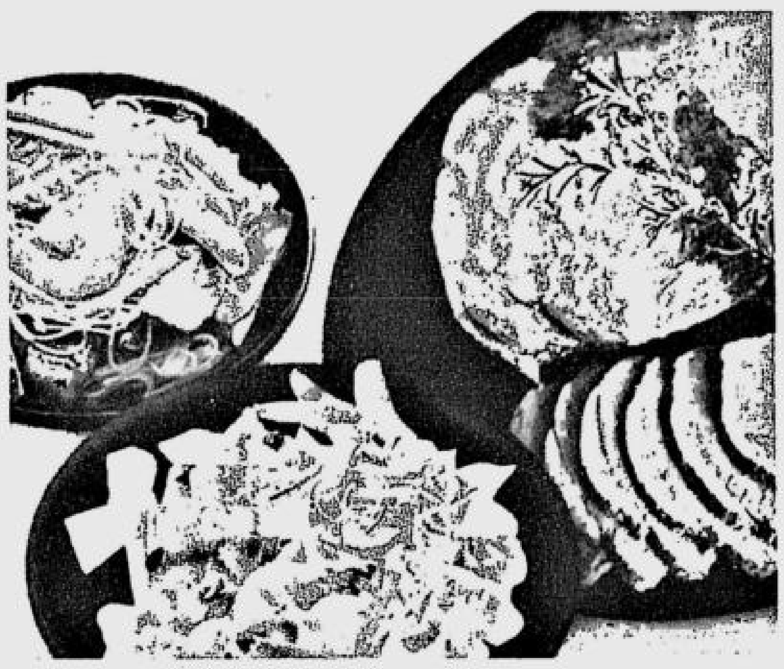
Each entry must be in English, from 4,500 to 5,000 characters (800 words) and typed double-spaced on two pages of short bond paper.

Each contestant should use a pen name for the byline and attach an envelope with information on the author, including real name, pen name, home address and telephone number, business address and telephone number (if employed), school name and address (and course, if in college), e-mail address, cell phone number, and fax number.

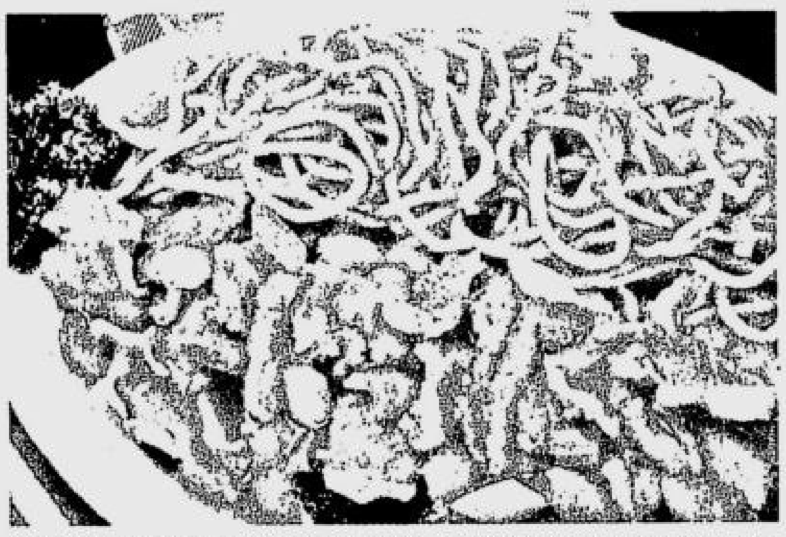
Each contestant is allowed two entries with different pen names.

Those who want to be entered in the special Student Category should indicate after their pen names that they are elementary, secondary or college students.

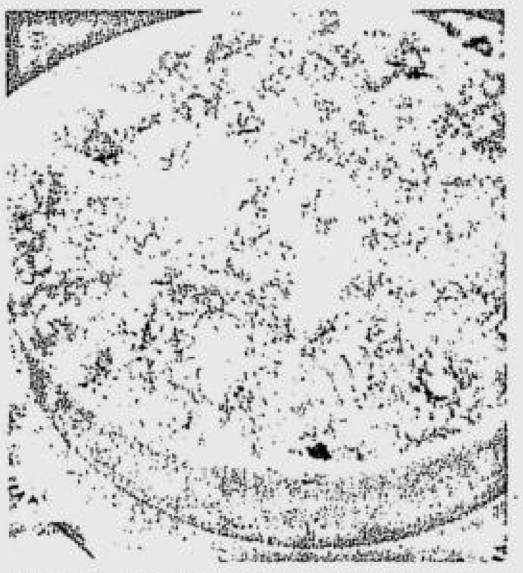
Entries may be delivered by hand or special delivery—a receipt will be issued—to the Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award, Attn: IWFS MLB Awards Committee, PRISM, 5th floor PDAF Building, Sen. G. Puyat Avenue (near corner Edsa), Makati City. Call 8958184.



CITY Garden presents "Roast Carving Festival" this month.



CHINESE MONK Casual Dining Restaurant offers Three Mushrooms Braised Duck, Black Bean Beef, Oriental Spareribs, Sherry Pork, Sweet and Sour Pork, Stuffed Tofu, Mushu Pork, Kung Pao dishes, Beijing Chicken, Crispy Noodles and Superior Dimsum. Chinese Monk is located at 1st level, Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati. Call 8973785/ 8974129/ 8969429.



SULO Hotel features French Apple Pie as Cake of the Month. The pie is offered with 50 percent off until Sept. 30 at the Patisserie. Mixed Shabu-Shabu is also available with 50 percent off during dinnertime until Sept. 30. Call 9245051 to 71.

Festival of roasts

DINING OUT

THE CITY Garden Suites' Café Miranda Restaurant features the "Roast Carving Festival" this September for only P199 net during dinner (Monday to Thursday). The buffet includes soup, salad, fruits, side dishes and meat. City Garden Suites is at 1158 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila. Call 5361451.

LOTUS Garden Hotel-Manila's Talyasi Restaurant launches its Power Platter packages. Power Platter 1 (serves one) offers Lechon Kawali, Beef Sirloin Steak, Chicken Adobo or Halabos na Hipon. Power Platter 2 (serves two) features Pinaputok na Pla Pla, Kare-kare Special, Beef Kaldereta. Power Platter 3 (serves three) has Pata Bawang, Sweet and Sour Lapu-Lapu. Lotus Garden Hotel is along A. Mabini Street, corner Padre Faura St., in Ermita, Manila. Call 5221515.

BURGOO American Bar and Restaurant introduces Great Food, Great Choices in its menu. This includes Louisiana Meatloaf, Southwestern Chicken Tenderloin, Tender Pork Marsala and Seafood Piccata. Burgoo is located at 310 Tomas Morato Ext., South Triangle, Diliman, Quezon City; 3/L, Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati; 2/L, The Podium, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong. Call 9277424/ 8981815/ 6875254.

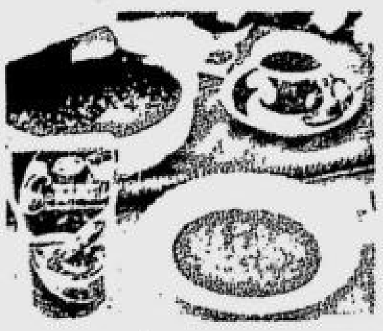
SPAMJAM presents the Jammin' Asia delights like Spam Fried Rice, Spam Spring Rolls and Spam Oriental Greens. This promo is ongoing until October.

CSB Hotel's Café de Manille offers a buffet every Friday. For only P250 net, one gets soup, salads, four main dishes, roast chicken or pork loin from the carving station, and an assortment of pastries and fruits for dessert. CSB Hotel is located at the DLS-CSB Angelo King International Center, Arellano corner Estrada Streets in Manila. Call 4003333.

New line of snack items

ENJOY the convenience of ready-to-eat dishes right off your shelves with the new Family Recipes.

A product of Readyfoods Manufacturing Corp. (RFMC) of the Pascua family, the line includes *champorado, nata de coco, kaong.*



Champorado is made with sweetened rice grains and cacao, and can be eaten even without sugar and milk. Nata de Coco and Kaong are available in red, white, and green. They can be eaten on their own or added to homemade *halo-halo.*

Family Recipes treats are now available at Landmark, all Robinsons supermarkets, Shopwise and other leading supermarkets nationwide. Sampling stations will be set up in supermarkets in the coming weeks. Call 8924206 or 8924207.

RICARDO S. Pascua (seated center), former vice chair/president and CEO of Metro Pacific Corp. and Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. is chair of the board of Readyfoods Manufacturing Corp., a family-owned enterprise.

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globe girlfriends

takes the Queen City by storm!

Girl power was in the air as Globe Girlfriends kicked off its reign in the Queen City of the South with a day of fashion, fanfare and all things female at the Ayala Center Cebu.

Globe Girlfriends is an exclusive lifestyle club for women which empowers them with freebies and discounts on fashion, food, fitness, and fun from various establishments nationwide.

Globe Girlfriends made a grand entrance into Metro Cebu with a motorcade that passed through the city's bustling thoroughfares. The upbeat rhythm and movement of the Landonian tribe, a perennial Sinulog Festival favorite, set the pace for the pink and white caravan, as the Globe Girlfriends team, along with local TV personalities Nedi Aviñante and Cathy Gabronino, enjoined fellow Cebuanas to take part in the day's festivities.

Welcoming Globe Girlfriends to town was none other than Cebu's grande dame herself, Governor Gwen Garcia, the province's only female governor to date. She and her hip teenage daughter Clarissa formally opened the female fun fair at the Ayala Center Cebu's activity center, where Globe Girlfriends partner establishments provided freebies and discounts for all Globe Girlfriends members. Fashion forward females availed of the free makeover from Avon and the complimentary gift from Penshoppe, while fitness enthusiasts grabbed the chance to sign up for Slimmers World memberships for only half the price. Foodies took notes at the Maggi cooking demonstration, as their family and friends struck a pose at Colours Foto Shop's photo booth.

Amidst all this fanfare was the live broadcast of popular regional noontime show *Sabado na Gyud*, which is co-hosted by Aviñante and Gabronino. The show paid tribute to the empowering spirit of Globe Girlfriends by presenting vignettes on Cebuanas who have successfully made their mark in their respective fields, most notably beauty queen Karla Bautista, multi-awarded professor Felisa Etimadi, and enterprising businesswoman Eva Santos.

And to cap the day's celebrations, Globe Girlfriends staged a fashion show for girlfriends of all ages. Young girls donned cute yet chic outfits by Big and Small Co. and SPIN, while Penshoppe catered to teenage trends. More formal ensembles for the professional woman were presented by Sari-Sari Store, as the specialty boutique Havin' A Baby showed motherhood in true Girlfriend style.

Substance and style are the mark of a Globe Girlfriend. With numerous life-enriching activities such as empowerment seminars, cooking lessons, and girls' nights out, as well as convenient text-based access to women-centered information and entertainment, Globe Girlfriends fosters connectivity among its members, modern independent women who know what they want, and want to have fun.

Indeed, Cebuanas can look forward to more empowering events and pampering privileges from Globe Girlfriends in the near future. For free membership, just text GIRLFRIENDS to 2209 and you've got it, girlfriend!

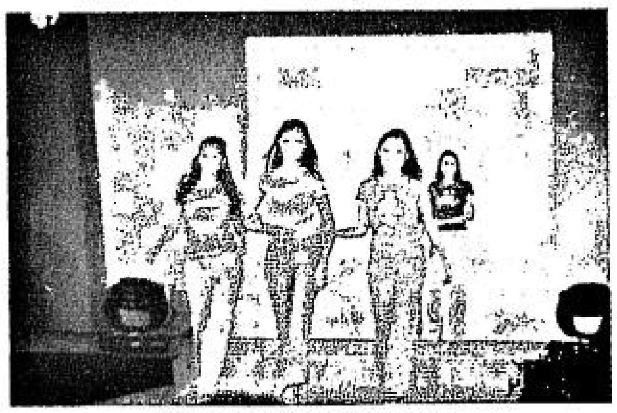
Girlfriend material: local TV personalities Nedi Aviñante and Cathy Gabronino

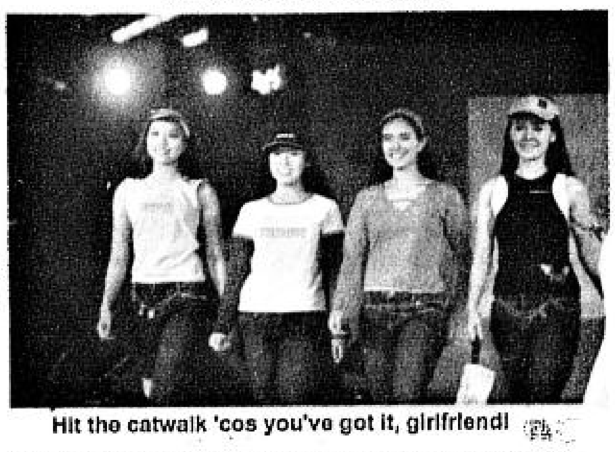
Fashion forward females get free makeovers from Globe Girlfriends' partner Avon.

From one Girlfriend to another.

Cebu's first female governor Gwen Garcia and daughter Clarissa welcome the Globe Girlfriends to Cebu.

Fitness is a must for every Globe Girlfriend.


Trendy styles for teenagers.


Hit the catwalk 'cos you've got it, girlfriend!

Girlfriends of all ages.

Cebuanas are Globe's latest Girlfriends.

Globe's Head of Prepaid Business, Joy Santos, tells Gov. Garcia and her daughter about the perks and privileges of being a Globe Girlfriend.

Globe Girlfriends check out the latest handsets that fit their mobile lifestyle.

The *Sabado na Gyud* hosts dance to the girl power groove.

Girlfriends grow up to be stylish mothers.

Globe Girlfriends' Senior Product Manager Leanne Florendo calls on all the Globe Girlfriends in Cebu.

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